

WEEPING FERRY

By MARGARET L. WOODS,

Author of "A Village Tragedy," etc.

COMPLETE.



LIPPINCOTT'S

(SEPTEMBER, 1897)

MONTHLY MAGAZINE

WEEPING FERRY	<i>Margaret L. Woods</i>	289-369
THE TREND OF HORTICULTURE . . .	<i>George Ethelbert Walsh</i>	370
AT BRIDGE TWENTY-TWO . . .	<i>H. H. Bennett</i>	376
THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN PROPHETS . . .	<i>William Trowbridge Larned</i>	382
EUROPE AND THE EXPOSITION OF 1900 . . .	<i>Theodore Stanton</i>	394
A FIDDLE IN THE DESERT . . .	<i>Charles M. Skinner</i>	399
THE CHICAGO DRAINAGE CHANNEL . . .	<i>John L. Wright</i>	410
AFTER THE STORM (Poem) . . .	<i>Mary McNeil Scott</i>	414
EUROPEAN HOUSEKEEPING . . .	<i>Frances Courtenay Baylor</i>	415
EMMY'S GOING HOME . . .	<i>Frank Crane</i>	420
MUSICAL MEXICO . . .	<i>Arthur Howard Noll</i>	424
BOOKS THAT GIRLS HAVE LOVED . . .	<i>Erin Graham</i>	428

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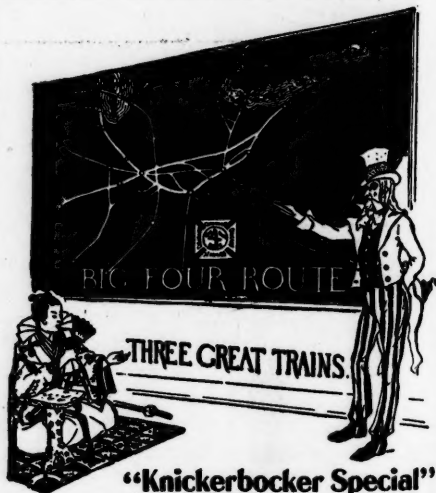
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AUTHOR OF "A VILLAGE TRAGEDY," ETC.

PHILADELPHIA:

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LIPPINCOTT'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

SEPTEMBER, 1897.

WEEPING FERRY.

PROLOGUE.

ELISABETH VYNE was making bread, and Tryphena Dangerfield sat on the corner of the table, swinging her legs in all the short-skirted freedom of fourteen. Mrs. Filkins stood with her foot on the fender, drying her petticoat at the fire, which burned brightly on the hearth-stone, under the wide chimney, and meditatively munching a bit of her sister-in-law's cake. It was past noon, and the white mist, which in the early morning clings to the surface of the river and the low meadows, now floated diaphanous in the air, lending a softness to the sunshine and a deeper purple to the distance. The willows and great elm-trees were little by little exchanging the cold bluish greens which they put on at the first approach of autumn, for the warm yellows of mid October, and the sunflowers in the Manor garden had rents in their big leaves, though they held their heads as high as ever.

The fuchsia bush and the blue Michaelmas daisies were still in flower, and the air was full of the scent of mignonette, which never smells so sweet as in the autumn sunshine. The path by which the flowers grew was paved. It started from a gateway with squared piers which had once been surmounted by two big stone balls. Only one now remained in its place; the other lay in the field outside, half overgrown with grass. A short flight of steps brought the path down to the level of the house, and to the left a grassy walk led up to a broad green terrace, surrounded by a yew hedge.

The gray Manor House with its stone mullions and blazoned porch, the garden with its last remnants of formality, suggested visions of ladies in jewels and brocade, and cavaliers with delicate hands clapped to ready sword-hilts. But very likely it had been neglected almost ever since it was made, and the Bampton, whose arms decorated the porch, had been for the most part homely folk, seldom better educated, and

on a weekday scarcely better dressed, than Elisabeth Vyne, who now made bread in their place.

"Mrs. Vyne," said Tryphena, imperiously.

Elisabeth measured the dough on the board with her eye, and pulled a bit off, before she replied,—

"Yes, Miss Tryphena."

"Why is blue cheese blue?"

Mrs. Vyne deposited the superfluous dough in the big red pan at her side, and powdered the remainder with flour. Then she answered, mildly,—

"Some folks do say it's the stuff that's put in it."

"But you don't put stuff in yours, do you?"

"Oh, dear, no, miss." And Mrs. Vyne smiled.

"Then why is it blue?"

Mrs. Vyne passed the rolling-pin over the dough several times.

"Other folks say it's the land," she replied, at length, with the same mild impartiality.

"But you made it the same when you were at the Meades', didn't you? So what makes it blue?"

"There's folks do say 'tis the season of the year," returned Mrs. Vyne, carefully shaping the two balls of her loaf; then, clapping the smaller one firmly on to the larger, she added, with sudden frank contempt, "But they none of them knows what they're talking about."

"Then what's the real reason?" asked Tryphena, eagerly.

Elisabeth looked meditatively at the dough in her pan. "There's just enough for one more,—old Catharine's," she observed. "Wouldn't you like to make old Catharine's little loaf, Miss Tryphena?"

"Yes, I should awfully, Mrs. Vyne. But do tell me what you think yourself about the cheese."

"I do think 'tis very good to eat with bread, miss," returned Elisabeth, placidly, "and if I don't make haste to get the oven hot, we shall have none to eat it with. But there! I'd quite forgot you wanted to see me make Spotted Dick. I'll run and get some currants directly, that I will."

And she left the room with a step that was still light, in spite of her thick-set figure and fifty-odd years.

Mrs. Filkins was smiling to herself. "You won't get nothing out of Lizzie she ain't got a mind to tell you, miss," she said. "Lor'! she's as close as the grave, she is!"

Mrs. Filkins looked like a Jewess, but she was an Englishwoman, and Thomas Vyne's sister. She was a tall woman, with a yellow skin, marked features, and a quantity of oily-looking dark hair dressed in a large chignon and surmounted by a large comb. The sisters-in-law were as unlike as possible. Elisabeth Vyne's hair was light brown, she was fair-skinned and blue-eyed, and talked in the high-pitched West Country voice, while Mrs. Filkins spoke with the Cockney vulgarity of the Midlands.

"I call it nonsense to make a mystery about cheese," pouted Tryphena, chagrined.

"I don't hold with answering little gals' questions myself," returned Mrs. Filkins. "There's no end to 'em if once you begin. But 'Lisabeth's awful close about everything. She don't seem to want sympathy the same as I do." And Mrs. Filkins, who had a liver which she mistook for a heart, sighed, and slowly shook her large jet ear-rings. "It's surprising 'ow cheerful she is, although she's 'ad her troubles, like the rest of us. Tom's not always been steady, and she've lost the two children that were her favorites, Jim and Bessie. Well, people's 'earts are made different! You could have knocked me down with a feather when I 'eard poor Bessie was dead. A young girl like that took off so sudden. But 'Lisabeth 'ardly said a word about it, and sent an extra lot of butter to the shop the same week."

Here Mrs. Vyne came back with the currants, and Mrs. Filkins continued, addressing her,—

"I was just saying to Miss Tryphena what a light 'eart you have, Lizzie; always keeping 'appy through all your troubles. So different from me."

"Well, I've got plenty of work to do, miss; that's where it is; and I enjoy my work, too. See now, you mix a few currants and some sugar with the dough, and that do make the Spotted Dick."

"So different from me," repeated Mrs. Filkins, with lugubrious pride. "Now, I'm that low-sperrited some days I can sit down and cry and cry for no reason whatever. My feelings always 'ave been so acute."

"You couldn't afford it if you was me," replied Elisabeth, without any intention of sarcasm, but making a statement of fact.

"I am sure I took on more about that child I was going to adopt dying than you did about Bessie. It quite haffected my happeite. But then you've got other children, and all doing well."

"Yes, they be all doing well," repeated her sister-in-law, slowly. "Now, miss, do you make old Catharine's loaf nicely, for she be fine and particular, I can tell you. There she is, bringing clay to close up the oven door; but she won't come in when visitors are here, and she'll scold me, that she will, for having them the day she's about."

"She doesn't mind me," replied Tryphena, beginning to make up the remains of the dough into a small loaf, "but I'm awfully afraid of her. She's a regular old witch, muttering spells in unknown tongues." A little figure, infinitely withered and dwindled, yet still upright, had come slowly down the steps to the porch, carrying a pail, and now a small white face was peering in at the window. Half a century ago the face had been pretty, but now it was wrinkled and shrunken and curiously blanched, under the crisp hair of a bright yellow color, flecked with white, which covered the strange little head.

"I can't think why you have her about," said Mrs. Filkins: "she's a deal too old to be of use."

Mrs. Vyne had stepped to the window and was moving her lips, with a grotesque exaggeration of the movements of speech. Old Catharine moved hers in reply, and strange sounds, low mutterings unexpectedly and momentarily breaking out into loud hoarse utterance, proceeded from them.

"Ugh! She's horrid!" exclaimed Tryphena. "Do you understand her, Mrs. Vyne?"

"I don't understand all she do say, poor thing; only a few words of it. She's going to put clay down outside."

Elisabeth opened the door of the great oven in the wall. There were still some embers of the wood with which it had been heated, lying on its floor, and sending a red glow into its cavernous depths.

"What a splendid oven!" exclaimed Tryphena. "I should like to get into it and be baked."

"You wouldn't like to be plastered up so as you couldn't get out," replied Mrs. Vyne, shovelling out the embers. "That's what we have to do with the bread, and a nasty job, too. I've spoken to land-lord about it times, but there! men is all the same, be they high or low. They think our work does itself, for all the world like the grass a-growing."

Mrs. Filkins shook her head and sighed an inarticulate Amen.

"That reminds me," she said, "I must go back and see how that girl's cooked the dinner. We've got Percy Hicks and his wife coming in. She ain't much to look at, but he seems pleased enough. Have you seen her yet, Lizzie?"

"No," answered Elisabeth. "I haven't seen much of him this long while."

Mrs. Filkins put on her hat and beaded mantle. While doing so, she exclaimed,—

"Why, 'Lisabeth, you've got another photo of Milly! I wonder she was taken in that nurse's dress, for all the world like a servant! I heard from a friend of mine at Swindon as that invalid lady she lives with treats her pretty near like a daughter. And Thomas was telling me, too, how well Tom and Jacob are doing in New Zealand, and Jacob going to be married now. It's no wonder you don't fret over your losses, when the children you've got left are doing so well."

"You've got no children of your own, Harriet, or you wouldn't talk sich nonsense," replied Elisabeth, with a slight compression of the lips.

"No, I've not," returned Mrs. Filkins; "I do believe it's that weighs on my mind and makes me so low-sperrited, though I can't always think of the reason. It's wonderful the luck you've had with your children. All of 'em a comfort to you, for that Jim and Bessie were to the last. Yes, I do think you've got reason to be thankful, Lizzie; there's many 'as 'ad worse trials nor you've 'ad."

So, full of vicarious contentment, Mrs. Filkins made her adieux affably and departed.

Elisabeth remained silent, wiping her clayey hands on her clean apron. The lines on her forehead had deepened, her mouth was pinched as though with pain, and her blue eyes had a fixed far-away look in them. Tryphena observed it.

"How stupid of Mrs. Filkins to talk as though you didn't mind about things!" she exclaimed. "I know you do really, Mrs. Vyne, though you don't go howling about the same as she would."

"I dare say I'm not so thankful as I should be for the ones that

"I've still got, miss," Elisabeth answered, slowly, and without moving. "A mother did ought to love all her children the same, and mine are good children. Only Milly she do hardly ever come to see us, and she have often wrote as though I should have given her a better education. But we've always been poor working folk, and I gave her the best I could, though like enough she do feel it a poor un now she's living among ladies. Us must seem rough to her when she do come home."

And Mrs. Vyne bent over the hearth and arranged the sticks on it, perhaps to hide some moisture in her eyes.

"Have Tom and Jacob got grand too?" asked Tryphena.

"I don't know about grand, miss: they're good boys, and would give me anything I asked for—but there! what a long way off they are! Then Tom's been married this five years and got a little family, and Jacob's going to be married now. It's only natural as they should be thinking mostly about their own affairs. And—well, a mother, I know, oughtn't to have no favorites, but somehow Jim did seem such a friend to I."

"I think I remember Jim, Mrs. Vyne. Wasn't he fair like you, with a jolly sort of face?"

A light flickered back into Elisabeth's eyes. She opened a work-box which stood on the window-seat behind the blue check curtain, and took a photograph out of a satin pocket, handling it carefully lest she should soil it.

"That's him, miss," she said, passing it to Tryphena. "He wer drowned six years ago come the 15th of November."

"I thought no one knew what became of his ship," returned Tryphena. "Perhaps he's still alive."

Elisabeth shook her head gravely, and began rinsing her hands in a basin of water.

"You'd think me silly-like, miss, if I was to tell you how I do know it. He was drowned on the 15th of November, about three o'clock in the morning, by our time."

"Oh, do tell me how you know!" cried Tryphena.

Perhaps Mrs. Vyne felt the need of expansion and sympathy which sometimes comes irresistibly upon even the most reserved women; for after a pause she continued,—

"You see, miss, Jim he always wer set on going to sea. He did use to say as he'd give it up if his mother forbid him formal; but seeing the boy so set upon it, miss, I hadn't the heart to do so; and many's the time I've been sorry for it since. But things do happen as it is God's will they should, and 'tis little use our fancying we might ha' set our will against Hisn and made 'em fall out otherwise."

Elisabeth rested her hands on each side the rim of the basin and looked straight before her with absent eyes. "At first everything did seem to go well," she went on. "He was a rare favorite aboard ship, yet as stiddy a chap as you could find. He come back home after every v'yage he made, and brought me presents—well, you've seen 'em in the glass cupboard in the parlor. The last time he come he was as jolly as ever, but just before he went he seemed to turn melancholy

like, and he said to me quite sudden, 'Mother, the old Castle'—that was his ship—'she's a floating coffin.' I warn't my heart came into my mouth. I begged and prayed un not to sail in her. But Jim he said, 'I'd rather go to Old Davy with a good cap'n like ours than sail in a liner with many a one. Only, mother,'—and he spoke it very solemn,—'if anything do happen to me, and it's the will of God that I should do so, I'll let you know how 'tis with me. I promise you that.' Well, you can fancy, miss, I was put about. I didn't say much to father or any one, but I kept promising myself that if Jim came back safe that time he should never sail in the Dover Castle again. We heard from him from Buenos Ayres saying all was well and he hoped to spend Christmas with us, and then—oh, miss, wasn't it strange, when he'd promised it to me, that he should come to father and not to me at all?"

The mother's voice complained, and her eyes filled with tears.

"Did Mr. Vyne see his ghost?" asked Tryphena, with breathless interest.

"I suppose it warn't his fault, poor boy," continued Elisabeth. "I do sleep so dreadful sound, and I never was one for dreams. But father he do often dream, and that night he screamed so loud in his sleep he woke me up. I asked un what ever was the matter, for he was trembling and all of a sweat, and he told me his dream. He thought he was on something, he didn't rightly know if it wer a rock or what, in the midst of a great heap of water, that was all of a foam and rushing past him like a mill-race. He knew it was night, yet he could see. And he saw the water bringing sommat along at a great rate, and when it came near he saw Jim's face looking up at him out of the water, with a scared sort of look. Then father ran and ran along by the side of the water, trying to catch hold of un, but he couldn't do it. And the poor chap says to him, 'It's no use, father; I'm a dead man. Give my love to mother.' Then father saw his face getting quite peaceful-like, but the water that wer rushing along all the time carr'd un right away, and father couldn't see un no more. So he begun to screech and holler, and woke me up. When he told me his dream, I knew as well as I do now that I should never see Jim again. No ship ever sighted the Dover Castle after she left the Plate River on the 10th of November, but they knew she must have run into foul weather before she'd been a week at sea."

There was a silence. Then, putting away the photograph in the work-box, Mrs. Vyne repeated, wistfully,—

"It was strange his coming to father and not to me, for it was me he promised."

"It was a strange thing altogether," said Tryphena, awe-struck. Then, lowering her voice still further, "But it was you that heard the Weeping Lady at the Ferry before poor Bessie died; and so did I. I shall always"—this with satisfaction—"be able to say I've heard a ghost."

Elisabeth seemed about to answer, then said nothing. Her face changed, as though the gates of her heart, which had been momentarily set wide, had been closed again and locked.

"Do you keep Bessie's photograph in that box too?" asked Tryphena, after some hesitation.

"No, miss," Elisabeth answered shortly, "I don't." Then she glanced at the clock. "Why, it's gone one! Father'll be wanting his dinner."

"And I shall be late for lunch again!" screamed Tryphena. "Oh, what will papa say! Good-by, Mrs. Vyne." She pulled open the door, fled up the steps, and after a brief struggle with the rusty garden gate disappeared into the field beyond.

I.

Bessie was the youngest and handsomest of Mrs. Vyne's handsome children. She liked dairy-work, and had a cool hand for butter, so her mother had kept her at home. Mr. Filkins, the grocer at Church Milton, rented the Manor and the pastures appertaining to it, and put in his brother-in-law, or rather his brother-in-law's wife, to manage the dairy. He sold the produce at his shop, to which the gentry for miles round sent for their butter and cheese. So there was plenty for Bessie to do at home; she was content to stay there, and her mother was more than content to keep her. Elisabeth Vyne loved her children, especially Jim and Bessie, with the subdued passion of a strong reserved nature which has found no other emotional outlet. Her husband she accepted without complaint, though she was sometimes heard to remark, in a cold, abstract kind of way, that a woman who could earn a good living for herself, and went and got married, was such a silly that she deserved it. She had been in Squire Meade's service for ten years before she had married his groom, handsome young Thomas Vyne, and for two years after that she had managed their dairy-farm. But Thomas had turned out badly. He drank and gambled, and finally embezzled his master's money to spend it on a girl in the neighboring village. After this the Meades had been unable to keep the couple in their service, but they had been faithful friends to Elisabeth during the bad years when her husband had been constantly out of place and she had been encumbered with the bearing and rearing of children. Without their timely aid, the youngest child would have been born in the workhouse, and the family possessions irretrievably scattered. When Elisabeth had been set free to work, things had gradually mended. During the ten years they had lived at Old Milton, Thomas had been lazy, but not particularly ill-behaved. A perception of the fact that his living depended on his wife may have had something to do with his comparative reformation.

Mrs. Meade's youngest child was three months older than Elisabeth's. It was a son and heir, the more valued because preceded by five daughters. They called him Geoffrey. Now, when Geoffrey was twenty-two, and had spent three pleasant years at Oxford, it happened that he came to Old Milton to expiate their idleness by a long vacation of reading with Mr. Dangerfield, the rector.

It was an event in Elisabeth's monotonous life when her "little Missus," as she still called Mrs. Meade, came to the Manor to take rooms there for Geoffrey and his young friend Owen Smith, and to commend "Master Geoffrey" to the faithful Elisabeth's particular care. There was little or nothing for the young men to do except read. A few phlegmatic fish lie in the deep pool at Weeping Ferry, just above the Manor, and on summer evenings one or two of the good burgesses of Church Milton may generally be seen standing motionless on the river bank, rod in hand, till the twilight falls. Neither Geoffrey nor his friend cared for this kind of sport. He was not indifferent to the beauties of nature. He spoke of the mountains in Scotland, where his father sometimes took a shooting, as "ripping good scenery," but from Weeping Ferry he wrote home that the river was a fraud and the country hideous. Yet the broad valley, spreading flat between its low boundaries, has a charm and a beauty of its own,—the charm of hushed solitude, the beauty of a great expanse of sky, which lends an infinite changefulness of color to the wide pastures, where the flocks feed, the river winding through them, the pale plumage of the willows, and the heavy masses of the elms, broken by sharp upspringing spires of poplars. Here and there out of some groups of the trees a homestead or a church tower pushes roof and wall of gray stone, pearl-gray as the light clouds on the distant horizon. Yet, despite these hints of human life, all is profoundly still, profoundly solitary. The cattle may stand all day in the water looking at their own reflections, undisturbed by a passing boat. By July the river is overgrown with the great woody stalks and white umbels of water-parsley, and fringed with floating beds of forget-me-nots, rosy thickets of loosestrife, and ranks of tall spear-headed reeds.

It was at this season that Geoffrey Meade first saw it, and pronounced it "a fraud." Yet he and his friend canoed upon it, and, for the rest, read, bicycled, attended occasional tennis-parties, and took the dulness of the world good-humoredly.

When Mrs. Meade visited Old Milton it was not only to see the rector; it was also to see his daughters. She and the Squire had no desire to see their treasured son and heir engaged at twenty-two to some penniless girl from a country parsonage. Her inspection of the three elder Miss Dangerfields was reassuring; and Tryphena was too young to count. The three girls were not only plain, but to a stranger indistinguishable from each other; though each in her secret soul was conscious of some personal point in which she had much the advantage of her sisters. Moreover, they were dull, and well satisfied with themselves because they were Dangerfields and near cousins of the present Lord Riversham. It was therefore with a mind quite free from matrimonial anxieties on her son's behalf that Mrs. Meade engaged rooms at Weeping Ferry. She did not happen to see Bessie Vyne, nor would it have troubled her to know that the girl was handsome. For, though Geoffrey gave himself up to the enjoyment of living more than his teachers could approve, his enjoyment was of the healthy out-door sort, and no one could be less inclined to dally with maidens of low degree. So he and Owen Smith came to the Manor. They were on excellent

terms with the Vynes, and doubtless admired Bessie; but their admiration was not enthusiastic, and she was a sensible and also a proud girl, without any desire to attract their attention.

So for a month or more all went on smoothly and monotonously at the Manor. Then on the same day in August both Owen Smith and Mrs. Vyne found themselves obliged to go away,—he to his own home, and she to a bed in Riversham Hospital.

II.

That morning old Catharine was hoeing her patch of garden. Her little knotty hands and thin arms, where the veins showed black through the withered skin, had far more strength left in them than could have been supposed. But she hoed slowly, and often stopped to blink her colorless eyes in the sunshine, which fell with a pleasant warmth on the damp little garden, surrounded by willows, and glittered on the mingled silver and yellow of her hair.

Old Catharine lived in the gray, tower-like Round House at Weeping Ferry. One tall poplar whispers above it, and about it the distorted willows lean this way and that. She had once a son who was lock-keeper there, but about the time of his death a railway company bought up the canal which joins the river at this point, in order to destroy its traffic, and the lock is almost disused. The water trickles through the chinks in the gates, and great burdocks press against them a luxuriance of broad green leaves and massive spikes of pinkish purple blossoms. Yet the gates are solid enough to serve as a foot-bridge over the canal to the meadows and the Vynes' house. The name of Weeping Ferry is very old,—older than the tall spire of Church Milton, which has looked far and wide over the valley for five hundred years. Only conjecture finds in it a record of

forgotten far-off things,
And battles long ago.

It is haunted, and on winter evenings the villagers prefer to pass it in twos and threes on their way home from market, along the raised causeway which runs straight across the water-meadows from the town. The river here divides into two branches. The main one curves away to the right, in the direction of the town; across the other a punt runs on a double rope, connecting the causeway with the tow-path of the canal. It is not only on account of the ghost that the villagers call Weeping Ferry "an unked place." Few persons in Old Milton would have confessed to a fear of being "overlooked;" nevertheless it was sometimes said and oftener hinted that folks old Catharine took against did not prosper. She was sixty and already nearly stone deaf when she came to Weeping Ferry. People said that, thirty years earlier, Catharine, in fine clothes and yellow ringlets, had been seen driving about the country in the bad Squire Tanfield's landau. But it was not this dim and doubtful memory that placed a barrier between her and

her neighbors. Chiefly, no doubt, it was her affliction, her difficulty in apprehending them, still more her own harsh confused unmodulated speech, which seemed to have lost its human tone. Besides this, something solitary, cynical, and domineering in her temper contributed to give her a sinister reputation. Elisabeth Vyne was her only friend. Elisabeth had once saved her life by nursing her through a severe illness. After this Catharine used to come to the Manor once a week to sew and do odd jobs, for which she would never accept payment in money, though she received it in other ways. She had a jealous love for Elisabeth, which she did not extend to her children, least of all to Bessie, her favorite daughter.

Old Catharine's eyes were as good as her hearing was defective, and as she leaned on her hoe and looked along the causeway she saw Elisabeth coming a long way off. She wondered what had taken Mrs. Vyne to town when it was not a market-day. Elisabeth pulled herself across the ferry wearily, and then turned aside to speak to Catharine in her garden. This she not unusually did, but to-day she had something special to say. Catharine understood her, and she Catharine, better than any one else.

Catharine paused in her hoeing and followed with her eyes the movements of Elisabeth's lips.

"You remember the accident I had with the milk-pails awhile ago?" asked Elisabeth, after the first greetings.

Catharine nodded.

"Well, doctor he do say I must go into hospital at oncet—into hospital."

Catharine shook her head.

"You—stop—at—'ome," she croaked.

"Doctor says no—hospital," shouted Elisabeth.

The pinched white nostrils of the old woman's delicate little nose became still more pinched with scorn.

"Doctors! Ay, doctors have got to get their living the same as other folks, but if I was you I'd leave 'em to terr'fy the gentry."

"If it was only Dr. Bates, I wouldn't take so much notice," returned Elisabeth, answering the expression rather than the words, only a few of which she could distinguish. "It ain't one day in ten he's sober. But it was Dr. Thompson, and every one do seem to put faith in him."

Catharine was leaning her chin on the top of her hoe. She lifted it just enough to give her jaws full play, and repeated, with hoarse distinctness,—

"You—stop—at—'ome."

"And what would become of us all if I was to lose my 'ealth and strength?" asked Elisabeth. "Listen, Catharine. I want you to go to the Manor every day while I'm away, to help Bessie. Aunt Filkins will be there, but she makes more work nor she does. Aunt Filkins and one young gentleman and Bessie. Do you understand?"

Catharine laughed a suppressed internal laugh that was not pleasant to hear. She put her face up as close as she could to Elisabeth's, and a lifted forefinger besides, to emphasize what she had to say. Then

she poured out jumbled sounds quickly in a low hoarse voice, making a kind of fog of utterance, from which only a few words emerged, harsh and toneless :

"Bessie—pretty girl—gentleman. I know gentlemen—don't you trust—gentlemen send girls to th' devil—to th' devil. I know gentlemen."

Elisabeth listened at first in mere bewilderment. Then she understood, and burst into indignant asseverations of Bessie's steadiness and Mr. Geoffrey's unimpeachable conduct; which indeed might be expected of him, seeing he was own son to Squire Meade and her old Missus.

The old woman watched Elisabeth, scraping her chin on the top of the hoe. While she listened thus, after her manner, a smile of the profoundest cynicism just lifted her withered lips and glittered in the recesses of her pale-colored eyes.

"I—know—gentlemen," she croaked again.

"What a cure you be, Catharine, to be sure!" exclaimed Elisabeth, impatiently, and added to herself, as she turned to go, "I declare, she do get quite childish. It's no use to try and explain anything to her."

Mrs. Vyne continued her homeward way. When she had crossed the lock she looked back, and saw Catharine make a gesture to arrest her. The old woman threw down the hoe on which she had been leaning, and ran across the garden with a swiftness extraordinary in one of her age. With the same weird agility, she mounted on to the narrow gangway behind the lock-gates, and stood there smiling down at Elisabeth, her wild streamers of hair burning orange in the sun against a cool breath of shadow on a willow behind her.

"All right, Mrs. Vyne," she said, with labored distinctness, pointing a skinny finger towards the Manor. "You leave 'er to me—leave 'er to me."

III.

Tryphena was walking along the top of the Manor garden wall. It was not a very high wall, but there was always a chance of falling into a muddy ditch outside it, and this, together with the fact that sometimes, as to-day, she had a basket of eggs to carry, made the thing just worth doing. She walked along it deliberately, and after her with equal solemnity marched Geoffrey Meade. He kept his hands in his pockets and tried to look as though it were exactly the same thing to him as walking on the path, though a perceptible sidelong sway of his body betrayed that it was not. When Tryphena came to the gate she got down, but he stepped on to the pier which had lost its ball, and sat there swinging his legs. Thence he contemplated her with an expression as dismal as nature permitted him to assume; for he had a rosy face, a full, smiling mouth, and a cheery blue eye.

"Tryphena, old girl," he said, sighing noisily, "you've no idea how beastly slow this place is."

"Come up to our house and play tennis," suggested Tryphena. Geoffrey looked blank.

"I don't think I can do that," he replied, with some hesitation. "You see, I've got—I'm reading so awfully hard."

Tryphena looked him through and through.

"Oh, what a lie!" she said.

He was lighting a cigarette.

"Suppose you stop and talk to me here," he suggested, when it was alight.

"No; mamma told me to come home," returned Tryphena, who was a good girl, in spite of some appearances to the contrary. Then, assuming that mature air which alternated so oddly with the harum-scarum in her deportment, "I can't think why you don't talk to the Vynes more. Now, I find them so very pleasant."

"Which?" asked Geoffrey. "Old Vyne?"

"Well, I don't know why people are so disagreeable about Mr. Vyne. He's not half bad when you get to know him. He could tell you a lot you don't know—about horses and things."

"Could he, by Jove?" And Geoffrey grinned a little; for, like many other young men, he liked to consider the horse his "strong subject."

"Mrs. Vyne's much nicer, of course," continued Tryphena. "But then she's not at home. But there's Bessie. Mamma says she's an awfully superior girl. She used to be at our house a lot, and mamma taught her singing and things, but papa didn't like it. He said it was putting her above her station."

"Oh, well, of course there's no use in doing that," returned Geoffrey, whose own views on social subjects were conservative. Yet he looked with more interest than before at Bessie, as she came round the corner of the house with some eggs in her apron. Mrs. Filkins was behind her.

"Hi, Bessie! Chuck us the eggs," screamed Tryphena.

Bessie came up the steps smiling, and put the warm brown eggs into her basket. Tryphena scudded away over the field, swinging it as she went, being filled with much faith in the miscellaneous powers of Providence to watch over eggs, children, and drunken men.

"Tryphena's been telling me you sing, Bessie," said Geoffrey.

"Yes, she's got a nice voice," returned Mrs. Filkins. "We're all musical in our family, but Bessie 'ave 'ad the most advantages, because Mrs. Dangerfield taught her music."

"It was on mother's account," explained Bessie, "because my sister Milly did keep on her so about sending me away to be educated. As if poor people like us could afford to do that."

"Education's rot," observed Geoffrey. "There's a lot too much of it nowadays."

"Oh, I never could abide my book!" cried Mrs. Filkins. "I'm all for music. Do you sing, Mr. Meade?"

"A little. I'm awfully fond of it."

"Well, I 'ope you'll honor us with a song sometimes. Bessie and I sing a deal when we're together."

IV.

That evening Geoffrey sat forlornly in the large square parlor at the Manor. Although it was August, the weather was damp, and the mist lay white and chill on the low meadows by the river. The oil lamp threw a strong light on the open volume before him, and left the room in shadow about him. His pipe was in his mouth, and his eyes mechanically followed the almost imperceptible smoke ascending from the chimney of the lamp to the low, whitewashed ceiling, where it spread a blackness in the space between two heavy beams. Without, all was not precisely dark, but dreary and formless, and now and then the ivy scraped on the pane of the uncurtained lattice. The sound of clattering plates and opening doors had ceased in the kitchen across the way. Mrs. Vyne had been accustomed to keep the kitchen conscientiously quiet of an evening, as she imagined the young gentlemen would greatly dislike anything which disturbed their studies. But now there arose a pleasant sound of voices. Mrs. Filkins and Bessie were singing. The aunt and niece had both a good ear for music, and good voices which harmonized well.

Geoffrey listened.

"By Jove! that's not half bad," he said to himself.

Presently he put his head in at the kitchen door, rather shyly.

"Do you mind my coming in, Mrs. Filkins?" he asked.

Mrs. Filkins soon dissipated his shyness. She was genial as an acquaintance, though she had drawbacks as a relation. The kitchen was much more cheerful than the parlor. The well-soured white table was drawn up near the hearth, the plain glass lamp burned brightly on it, Mrs. Filkins sat on one side in a high-backed wooden arm-chair with a cushion, and on the other Bessie's dark head was bent over her mending. A black kitten with a red ribbon round its neck sprawled before the fire, clawing the matting with a rasping noise or making a startling dash at some careless foot swung in time to a tune. From either end of the high narrow chimney-piece, set with a row of cheap fairings, two large white china dogs, brown-eared and circular-eyed, stared over the heads of the party, with an eternally smiling serenity worthy of Egyptian sphinxes. The dresser, where some old pewter plates and dishes showed bright among common blue ware, even the brown hams hanging from the ceiling, seemed to add to the homely comfort of the room. Geoffrey was soon at home there. He knew an immense number of songs, some broadly comic, some of the characteristically English sort, half humorous, half sentimental, some patriotic, and a very few wholly sentimental. The two women, whose own *répertoire* was entirely sentimental and religious, caught up the tunes and joined heartily in the choruses. Sometimes Thomas Vyne, smoking silently in the black chimney-corner, would take his pipe out of his mouth and swell the round with a few bass notes.

So the time passed cheerfully enough; and the next evening, and the next, and many more in the same way. But sometimes they adjourned to the parlor, where Bessie played dance-music on a crazy

piano. Mr. Vyne commonly took advantage of his wife's absence to spend his evenings at the "Seven Stars," whence he returned in the sodden condition that was his Nirvāna.

V.

When his wife was at home, Thomas Vyne did his half of the churning, for a large modern churn is a heavy machine for a woman to work. But as soon as his daughter was left alone, his share dropped to a quarter. At last he gave it up altogether. For, slouching along one day from the back of the house to the front, by the narrow gravel path which ran round it, he happened to look in at the long, low casement of the kitchen. Bessie was not churning. She had her sleeves tucked up, and was leaning with one strong white arm on the churn, turning a pretty laughing profile away from the window towards the handle. And bent almost double over the handle, working with both hands, was Mr. Geoffrey; but as he bent he also lifted towards her a rosy boyish face, as laughing as her own. Thomas Vyne retreated from the window to the corner of the house and stood there thinking. His eyelids drooped over his eyes, that were dark like Bessie's, but prominent and dull, and he smiled a slow smile of satisfaction, and also of contemptuous wonder at the folly of a man who could exert himself when he was not obliged. He had been young and handsome once, and the women had been fond of him, but he had never done their work for them; on the contrary, they had worked for him. He went to the stack-yard, and, selecting a place where some of last year's hay lay tumbled in the shadow of a tall new rick, he lay down flat on his back, with his corduroy-trousered legs apart, his hands clasped under his head, and his shapeless hat tilted over his eyes. Nothing of his face remained visible except the grizzled, unshaven chin, and the loose-lipped mouth, on which an expression of satisfaction lingered even in his sleep; for his visions were literally golden.

Churning was not the only dairy-work for which Geoffrey developed a taste. At this time of year it was Mrs. Vyne's custom to put a cheese into the press every morning before half-past nine, and Bessie would not have thought of breaking the rule in her absence. Geoffrey discovered that it was rather good sport breaking the great smooth curd in the vat with a kind of wooden rake and hunting the pieces about till they were reduced to the smallest possible fragments. Besides, it got him up in the morning, so that he arrived at his tutor's with a comparative punctuality which at first quite took that worthy man aback.

Once he even helped with the washing. It was a hot day, and Bessie went up to the bowling-green with a basket of wet linen under her arm. The bowling-green was a terrace at the upper end of the garden, surrounded by a yew hedge, and led up to by grass steps. The young men had made a tennis-lawn of it when Owen Smith was at the Manor. Bessie walked slowly up the turf path, between the

gay ranks of rose-colored and white phloxes, and the sweet gray lavender bushes full of bloom. She was tired, and glad to breathe the fresh air, after the steamy atmosphere of the wash-house. When she came to the round arch in the hedge of the bowling-green, she paused in surprise; for Geoffrey was lying on the grass in his shabbiest flannels, smoking, and reading the newspaper.

"Why, Mr. Geoffrey!" she exclaimed. "I thought you was going to a garden-party this afternoon."

"So I was," replied Geoffrey, gravely, sitting up and taking the pipe out of his mouth. "But I've been taken suddenly and seriously unwell."

"Oh, dear!" cried Bessie, opening concerned eyes. "Would you like the doctor sent for?"

Geoffrey burst out laughing.

"Observe my symptoms," he said.

He ran and jumped over the tennis-net, then hopped back.

Bessie laughed too, but colored, a little mortified at her own simplicity.

"What a lot of nonsense you do talk, to be sure, Mr. Geoffrey!"

"Of course I try to humbug people, but I don't succeed, except with you. You're so precious—well—green."

Bessie smiled, but said nothing, for fear she should again say something wrong. There is nothing which differs so much from country to country, and from class to class, as pleasantry, and she was instinctively afraid of indulging in it with Geoffrey. She spread the linen on the broad yew hedge, which had been cut low on the farther side of the green.

"Why don't you like going to tennis-parties?" she asked.

He jumped up and seized the other end of a sheet which she was trying to shake out.

"Because I prefer hanging out the clothes."

"I shouldn't, if I was you. I'd a deal sooner play tennis."

"Depends who you play with. The girls about here seem uncommon dull."

The sheet was spread out between them and went on to the hedge with a heave.

"If you find the ladies about here dull, you must find me a lot worse," said Bessie, after a pause.

"Oh, come, I say, Bessie! who's talking nonsense now?"

She untwisted a towel and flapped it noisily.

"Well, I've never been to London or anywhere, and I've not learnt things like ladies. I don't know as I thought much of Milly's talk about education when I was younger, but I often wish now I wasn't so ignorant."

Geoffrey leaned his back against the hedge and put his hands in his trousers-pockets.

"Now, my good girl, don't go on talking that sort of rot! Who, in the name of wonder, cares whether you're ignorant or not? Of course it's all right for ladies to go to school, but afterwards do you suppose any one cares two straws what they've learnt? It's an awful

mistake educating girls as people do now. Men don't like it. They don't marry them. What a man likes is——"

So far Geoffrey's discourse had been abstract, the education of women being a favorite subject for animadversion in the Meade family. But Bessie was standing opposite him, drinking in his words, and he broke off.

"Why, Lor' bless me, Bessie," he exclaimed, with a short laugh, "it's perfectly ridiculous your talking about education and that, when—well, I suppose it's like my impudence to tell you so, but still you must know you're fifty times better-looking than any other girl in this blooming country, lady or not."

The admiration in his look was frank and warm. Bessie turned away slowly and spread a towel on the hedge. His eyes dwelt on the glossy blackness of her plaits and the curves of her creamy cheek and throat. He had never before fully realized her beauty. Neither had she.

VI.

The relations of Geoffrey Meade and Bessie continued for a week or two only such as a clear-sighted observer might have called, according to his temper, those of flirtation or of comradeship.

It was at any rate a gossamer idyll, such as the least wind of chance might have blown away, to leave no trace on the heart of one at least of the couple. Yet they somewhat modified each other's ideas. Geoffrey, comparing the ungraceful and ungracious scions of the aristocracy at the rectory with Bessie Vyne, felt his faith in gentle birth waver. Bessie, by nature a radical, though controlled by her mother's conservatism, began to doubt whether her mother and Milly knew so much about ladies and gentlemen as she had been used to believe they did. And all the while old Catharine, washing up dishes in the scullery or moving about, duster in hand, kept a pale, suspicious eye on the young people, while they exchanged laughter and talk that to her was silence. She came to envy Bessie with an envy that was almost hate, for her beauty, for the young gentleman's admiration of it, and for the chances it would give her. She, deaf old Catharine, had had rich gentlemen after her once; she had had chances too. She reckoned them up in her long broodings, and magnified them, all the splendid chances she had thrown away in her devil-may-care youth, to come at last to this.

When Elisabeth had been gone three weeks, Catharine was left alone to superintend the young people, for Mrs. Filkins went away. She had begun to suspect that Mr. Filkins and the niece left in charge of him were getting along altogether too comfortably without her. Therefore she said that everything was going to sixes and sevens in consequence of her absence, and that Filkins in particular was so much affected by it that he looked as though he were going to have a stroke; which indeed, at his age, as she had often told him, he might confidently expect, and she shouldn't think it right not to be there. So she went back to Church Milton.

The first evening Geoffrey and Bessie were left alone in the house—for Catharine had gone home and Thomas to the "Seven Stars"—Geoffrey determined to devote himself to his books. He worked conscientiously for more than half an hour. Then, while his bodily eye travelled over the printed page, his mind's eye saw nothing but Bessie sewing alone in the kitchen. At last, when he had read ten pages without having the slightest idea what they were about, he remarked to himself, "Confound it all, it is too absurd"—If there was no one in the house, so much the better. There would be no one to put a disagreeable construction on a perfectly innocent friendship.

Yet when he came to the kitchen door he knocked at it hesitatingly, and when Bessie said, "Come in," he only put his head in.

"Are you awfully busy? Please say if I'm a nuisance, but I've picked out that song I couldn't remember, on the piano, and I thought p'raps you'd like to hear it."

At first Bessie seemed as though she did not want him, but when he began to beat a retreat she called him back. He took Mrs. Filkins's deserted chair, and they behaved exactly as they had done when she was there, except that they sung less and talked more. There was nothing particular in their talk, but it took a color of intimacy from its circumstances, as they sat on each side of the hearth. In this way they spent several pleasant evenings.

There were short blue and white cotton curtains to the kitchen window, which Bessie always carefully drew as soon as it was dusk. One night there was a strong wind,—a wind that beat the heavy-headed trees this way and that, shattering their twigs and sending a host of prematurely fallen leaves scurrying over the meadows and along the white country roads. The earth beneath seemed full of the tumultuous motion of things and their shadows, but in the sky above the moon rode serenely, watched by a far-off circle of palely twinkling stars.

When Geoffrey came in he flung back a curtain with a sharp jingle of rings.

"What a jolly moon! Come and look at it."

"Oh, don't!" cried Bessie.

"Don't what?"

She stepped quickly to the window, pretended to look out, and put the curtain back in its place.

"I can't abide the moon, nor the dark neither," she said, going back to her chair and taking up her sewing.

She denied that she was either timid or fanciful about anything else, but she'd had that fancy from a child. She couldn't help being afraid at night that if she looked up from her work and the curtain wasn't drawn, she might see—see something peering in at her out of the darkness. It was silly, of course, and mother scolded her for it, but she couldn't help it. Did Geoffrey know about the Weeping Lady? No, Geoffrey had never heard of her. Well, of course it was all nonsense about ghosts, but they did say there was once a young lady living at the Manor—that was in the Bampton time—and she had a lover. And news came that her lover was false to her, and she ran straight out and

drowned herself in a deep pool in the river, just where the canal came in now. Mother didn't like them to talk about such stuff, but the story went that the lady's ghost walked by the river there.

There were people in Old Milton, and Church Milton too, who declared they'd not been able to get their dogs past Weeping Ferry at night, the poor beasts trembled and whined so pitiful. And sometimes, it was said, the lady walked across the Long Meadows to the Manor, sighing and wailing all the way and with the wet dripping from her clothes as she went, and she never came into the house, but walked round and round it on the little flagged path, and looked in at the windows as she passed, as though, poor soul, she were seeking to be let in. Mother didn't believe a word of it, and went out herself at all hours, when the cows wanted seeing to. But father declared that once he—here Bessie broke off with a sharp little cry, and jumped up so precipitately that she scattered her work-things all over the floor. She caught Geoffrey by the shoulder, staring at the door, which opened into the porch.

"Look!" she whispered, pointing, and had to swallow something in her throat before she could articulate again. "Look!" Geoffrey turned his head hurriedly. A hole some five or six inches square had been cut out of the door and a pane of glass let in. This aperture, which had been dark, was now filled by something white,—a whiteness as of a pallid human face pressed against the glass and broken by two shadowy pits for eyes. For a minute or more the two young people remained pressed together, fixed in a horrified stare at the white thing which seemed to be looking at them. Then the aperture was dark again.

They neither of them spoke, but Geoffrey walked to the door, opened it, and stepped out into the blackness of the porch. Outside in the moonlight, slowly mounting the steps, he saw the figure of a woman,—a little old woman with a gray knitted shawl tied over her head and shoulders, and a thin cotton skirt and apron, which the wind blew wildly about her. Geoffrey called after her, but she went on mounting the steps at the same slow pace. At the top of them she paused. She had got out of the shelter of the house, and a gust of wind caught her and almost whirled her round.

Bessie had stepped out into the porch, and stood behind Geoffrey.

"Why, if it ain't old Catharine!" she cried. And her terror turned to irritation, violent with the reaction of her shaken nerves. She bounded half-way up the steps and caught Catharine by the skirt. The old woman turned with a harsh cry of fear and anger, and tried to pull away her dress. Bessie held it fast. The wind wrapped her own black dress about her, and blew her black hair from her forehead in fantastic little streamers.

"Catharine!" she shrieked, "how dare you come crouching and spying about the place at this time o' night? What do you mean by——" She ended with an "Oh!" clapping her hand to her mouth. Catharine had dashed five yellow talons up the length of it, and the blood spurted. Bessie dropped down the steps she had mounted, nursing her bleeding hand. Old Catharine turned her head this way

and that, as though hesitating whether to go or stay, then went slowly towards the gate.

Bessie, taking her hand from her mouth, broke into an hysterical laugh. "Oh, dear! oh, dear! I really did take her for a ghost!"

Geoffrey laughed too, embarrassed.

Catharine, not yet half-way to the gate, glanced quickly round. Bessie's laugh had pierced her old ears, and her keen eyes caught them both still laughing in the moonlight. In a moment she was back again at the top of the steps. Her hands clutched her skirt in a convulsion of rage, and she stooped to bring her face nearer to them.

"Ha, ha! He, he!" she shrieked, mocking their laughter, with chin thrust out and crooked mouth gaping mere blackness in the moonlight. For a minute she cried out shrilly, with a sound hardly more human than the whine of the wind round the corner of the house. Then her voice fell, and distinct words came:

"Laugh—laugh at old Catharine, did you? I'll make you laugh wrong side your mouth, Bessie Vyne. I watched you—I'll tell—you and gentleman. He won't marry you—not he. I know gentlemen. Send you to the devil, and serve you right. He'll send you to the devil, you——"

There followed a string of foul terms of abuse. Geoffrey, who had stood for a while as though petrified, now stepped up to her. He placed his hands on her shoulders and endeavored to turn her round in the direction of the gate. For a few moments she attempted to resist, pouring out half-articulate curses. Then, twisting away from under his hand, she ran along the paved path, through the gate, and away round the corner of the garden, with the lightness of a withered leaf before the wind. Geoffrey walked to the gate, which he shut, and stood looking after her, cursing also between his teeth. When he turned round, Bessie was gone. The moonlight was stealing along the front of the old house, silvering its roof and slanting black shadows across it from the least projection of its stone-work. The tall sunflowers in the garden tossed and bowed before the gale till they almost swept the ground, clapping their broad leaves together with a cheerless sound. From time to time the branch of an elm outside answered them with a groan. Geoffrey stood there in the wind, miserable with the acute and helpless misery of youth placed suddenly in an awkward situation. He felt that he ought to go in-doors and say something to Bessie, but he could not for the life of him think of the right thing to say. In a few minutes he gave up trying to think, and walked into the kitchen, trusting to fate. To his relief, Bessie was not there. He went through into the passage. A small table stood there with a shiny cloth on it, a petroleum lamp, and beside that his bedroom candle and matches, placed ready for him. The old staircase of the Manor had been burnt down years ago, and the lamp lighted a narrow white deal stair, very clean and very steep. It looked cheerless, and so did the parlor, where the lamp had smouldered low and smelt vilely. Geoffrey lit his candle and went slowly up-stairs to his bedroom. That too was clean and bare, yet smelt fusty with the fustiness of generations of feather beds. The low four-post bed had very white

dimity curtains and a patchwork coverlet which Elizabeth and Bessie had made together when Bessie was still a little girl. Geoffrey sat down on the edge of it. The single candle flickered in the draught and sent a large unflattering silhouette of his profile wavering about the whitewashed wall, sometimes invading, sometimes receding from, a text illuminated by Tryphena with a prodigal expenditure of shell, gold, and ultramarine. In a few minutes he felt a flash of indignant contempt for himself. By avoiding Bessie he was making things awkward for her. So he stumped resolutely down the creaking stairs and knocked at the kitchen door. Bessie was sitting by the table, and as he came in he saw her snatch up her sewing, which was lying at a little distance from her. He came in slowly and stood in front of the hearth, with one heel on the fender. Bessie's dark head was bent over her work, but he saw her handkerchief lying beside her in a little wet ball, and thought he detected a moist gleam about her silken eyelashes. He was immediately pierced to the heart by an acute consciousness of guilt and an equally acute desire to console.

"I just came in to say good-night," he said, humbly.

Bessie was furious with herself for not being able to answer, but she had given way to her tears, imagining Geoffrey to be safe up-stairs, and could not immediately check them. Geoffrey turned one of the large china dogs a little, carefully, as though its lifted nose and round O's of eyes had not been pointed at precisely the right spot on the opposite wall. Then he glanced down again and saw a bright drop just falling on Bessie's work. In a moment he was on his knees by the table, leaning his arm on it.

"Please don't cry, Bessie," he said. "I can't tell you how sorry I am. I'm afraid it's upset you most awfully."

Bessie murmured something husky about it being perfectly horrid, but not his fault.

"Oh, yes, it is! I ought to have prevented it. I ought to have kicked the old dev—wretch out before she could get up her steam. I'm sure it's my fault somehow. I can feel it is."

"Oh, no, no! It's not a bit. And anyhow she'd seen."

"But there wasn't anything to see, my dear girl."

"No, but she'll say—oh, dear!" And Bessie put her arm on the back of her chair and laid her forehead on it.

"Never mind what she says." Geoffrey was unconsciously edging nearer to Bessie as he talked. "For one thing, not a soul can understand her jabber except your mother."

"But she'll say to her—and, oh, mother will be so vexed!"

There was a pause.

"I suppose I oughtn't to have come into the kitchen," he said, ruefully. "I knew it was my fault somehow."

"No, no!" cried Bessie. "It was most kind of you, I'm sure. I should have been dreadful dull of an evening all by myself. And— and there wasn't any harm."

She blushed and turned away, twisting her wet handkerchief round her fingers.

"Will your mother scold you, Bessie?" he asked.

"I don't know about scold; she don't say much, but I can't bear mother to be vexed with me. I'm quite childish, as you may say, about it."

"But she can't be vexed,—at least not with you," said he, with cheerful conviction.

"Oh, yes, she will. Mother's awful good and kind, but she's so very—well, I don't know—so very——"

She twisted herself still more round from him, and dabbed the wet handkerchief hastily on her eyes. This fresh outbreak of tears was more than Geoffrey could stand. Before he quite knew what he was doing, his arm was round her waist and a little kiss fell hap-hazard just between her cheek and her throat.

"Poor little Bessie! Don't cry," he said softly in her ear. At the touch of his hand and lips Bessie seemed to herself to start; but it was only a start of the blood, not outwardly perceptible. The tears dried up in her eyes as though by magic, her breath came pantingly, and she drew a little towards him instinctively, her thoughts at an entire pause. He kissed her again, this time on her chin, just below the corner of her mouth.

"Come, cheer up, old girl," he said. But it did not matter to himself or to her precisely what he said. It was an utterance of caress and comfort independent of words.

The back door opened with a clattering noise.

It was Thomas Vyne, returning from the "Seven Stars" and stumbling over a row of milk-pails put ready for the morning's use.

Geoffrey rose hastily from his knees.

"I suppose I'd better be off," he said. "Good-night, Bessie. Now mind, you're not to cry any more."

He went up-stairs, and fancied that Thomas, somewhere in the background among the milk-pails, did not observe him. But Thomas, closing the kitchen door behind him with a meaning grin, said to his daughter,—

"'Uilo, Bessie! Gettin' a sweet'ear?"

"No, father. Please don't talk nonsense."

"Nonsense, is it? I've seen a bit more of the world nor you have, or mother either, for the matter o' that, and I say Geoff Meade's gettin' uncommon sweet on you. Well, I've known queerer things to 'appen than for a good-lookin' girl like you to get married by a gentleman."

"Don't, father! I'm sure I never thought of anything of the kind."

"Ha, ha! 'Aven't yer, now? But 'ave it yer own way, Bessie. I ain't a-goin' to spile sport. But remember this, my gurl,"—and he wagged his head solemnly,—“the Vynes 'ave seen better days, as well you know. Yer poor old father come down in the world and married a laborer's daughter,—all his own fault, my dear, his own fault!—but it 'ud be a great comfort to 'im in his old age to see his gurl a-ridin' in her kerridge."

He was in a sentimental stage, and went to bed feeling a good father.

Bessie had usually but a moderate amount of respect for her father's ideas, but on this occasion they influenced her more than she would have been willing to allow. Instead of jumping into bed quickly, as usual,

she undressed slowly, with many pauses, though the wind that roared in the chimney and shook the leaded casements chilled her bare arms and shoulders. As she sat on the bed with her loosened hair about her, she happened to catch sight of her own reflection in the shabby little looking-glass. She fixed her eyes on it for several minutes with an earnest scrutiny, then flung herself face-foremost on the pillow, in a rapture of she knew not what. Up to the day when Geoffrey had helped her to hang out the clothes, she had been one of those exceedingly rare women who are really unaware of their own beauty, or at any rate of its power. Such unconsciousness is supposed to add a charm, and the appearance of it does so; but the reality blunts the edge of beauty even more than an excessive consciousness.

Geoffrey was also more wakeful than usual. He thought a good deal about Bessie: what a clipper she was, and what a shame of her mother to allow a foul-tongued old hag like the deaf woman to come about the premises. He hoped Bessie wasn't crying herself to sleep; and went to sleep himself, feeling very tender-hearted over her.

There were only five days more before Elisabeth came home from the hospital. But five days can sometimes work a greater change than as many years. Geoffrey and Bessie were more constantly together than before. Their conversation when alone became disconnected, and when connected somewhat vacuous; for they were too much absorbed in the fact of each other's presence to care what they were talking about. Yet Geoffrey was not aware that anything important was going on. He was not in the habit of analyzing his own feelings, or the remoter results of his conduct. A strong impulse was carrying him along, and, conscious that he had no evil intentions, he did not make any effort to resist it. Perhaps he could not have done so if he had tried.

VII.

Saturday was one of the days that Percy Augustus Hicks—Mr. Filkins's young man—drove the cart round by Old Milton for orders. Mrs. Vyne came home in it, and he made himself particularly agreeable to her. He had long cherished a humble and tender sentiment for Bessie, which contrived not merely to live but to thrive on her chilly indifference. He was now Mr. Filkins's right-hand man in the business, and, being well able to afford a wife, was determined to lay siege to Miss Vyne in due form. Elisabeth, fresh from the seclusion of the hospital, sat at his side, looking out on the world with those eyes of convalescence which see it as it were new-created and see that it is good. The sunny market-place, deserted save for one girl carrying the family dinner to the bake-house; the noisy rush of shouting boys from the school-house, as the cart spun down an irregular street; the tramp, tramp of the big horse along the white country road, so flat that the rising curve of the old bridge looked like a considerable hill upon it; all the common out-door sights and sounds, the common stir of life, struck upon her senses with an exhilarating sharpness. Her

mood was favorable to the young man. A mother's desire to marry her daughter is apt to be in inverse proportion to her love for her, and Elisabeth was in no particular hurry to find a husband for Bessie. But the girl must marry some day, and she might do worse than take a steady civil-spoken young man in Uncle Filkins's business. Before they reached the place where the farm-track to the Manor leaves the high-road, Percy Augustus Hicks felt that he had succeeded in recommending himself to Mrs. Vyne. The young man drove his cart, all piled up at the back with white baskets, along the track and into the farm-yard at the back of the house, with a dash worthy of any sworded and bewigged young squire coming to court a daughter of the blazoned Bampton. Bessie and Uncle Lambert were swilling out milk-pails by the back door. Uncle Lambert, who came in to help at the farm when hands were short, was an old man, still wearing the smock frock and beaver hat of a past generation. He was not known to be uncle to any one in particular, but was called uncle as a general and complimentary title. The clatter of the milk-pails prevented Bessie from hearing the cart driving up, till it was in the yard; then she hurried to meet her mother with a welcoming brightness on her face. She did not notice young Hicks, and Elisabeth, climbing slowly down from the high cart, forgot him too. The mother and daughter kissed just once, and then stood looking at each other with satisfied eyes.

"Well, so you're back, mother. How are you?"

"A lot better, thank you, my dear. How are you yourself? You're looking poorly."

"Me? Oh, no; I'm well enough."

Her mother looked at her again. It was true she was not looking exactly poorly. Her face was more fine-drawn and mobile than it used to be; there was a blue shadow under the long-lashed eyes, telling of broken sleep, but the eyes themselves were bright, the carriage of the head more alert, her complexion more radiant in its pallor. Elisabeth felt there was a change, though she could not tell what it was. She remained standing, basket in hand, in her round black cashmere mantle and black lace bonnet as flat as though an iron had been passed over it. Her quiet eyes passed from her daughter to the farm-yard, the huge barn with its high-pitched gray roof and the wide black gape of its doorway, where the irresolute fowls hopped in and out, the rows of empty cow-stalls, with orange stone-crop and seeding grass overgrowing their roofs, and the little black pigs colloquing round an empty trough. The picturesque dilapidation of the place was distasteful to Elisabeth's conscious practical self, but it appealed to something else in her, and she was glad to see it again. But she noted that Tom had allowed the manure-heap to encroach over most of the yard, and that a dairy window looking onto it was open, as it never ought to have been.

Meantime the young man in the cart had touched his cloth cap more than once. At length Bessie noticed him and gave him a cold "good-morning." He was of average appearance, and by no means a fool, but he struck her as looking particularly foolish and plain this morning, smiling at her through his stubbly red moustache.

"You'll be glad to have Mrs. Vyne back, miss," he said.

"Yes," replied Bessie.

"She seems quite nicely, too."

"Yes, she does."

"Any orders to-day, miss?"

"No, thank you, nothing."

And Percy Hicks drove away dispirited.

VIII.

On Monday evening Elisabeth sat alone in the kitchen. Bessie had gone to a Girls' Friendly Society tea at Church Milton. After the tea there was to be an entertainment, and both Geoffrey and Bessie had been practising glees for it at the rectory.

An instinctive shyness, perhaps a secret consciousness of indiscretion, had prevented Geoffrey from seeking Bessie's society since her mother's return. He had contented, or discontented, himself with chance words and stolen looks. Elisabeth had not yet found any clue to the change in Bessie which puzzled and indefinitely chilled her. The girl seemed to have retired beyond her mother's touch into some inner place of her being. She was not interested in her work, and there was an end to the happy glow of little talk which had been used to sweeten the daily toil and the quiet hours by the hearth.

Elisabeth generally read aloud a newspaper or a magazine in the evening, while Thomas smoked his pipe and Bessie sewed. This evening she had a local newspaper in her hand, but her eyes were not on it. They rested musingly on the fire, and then rose to the high chimney-piece. Its row of fairings, chimney-vases, and white china figures with half the gilt washed off represented to her severally pleasing episodes in her past. Here was the wooing of a respectable tradesman of mature years, whom she had rejected for Tom; there Tom's own wooing. The brown and white dogs had been bought at a fair years ago, by a general subscription among her children. She could see the proud and rosy troop marching in at the door of the cottage where they were living at the time, Jim carrying one smiling dog and Milly another. Milly was almost a lady now; but not quite, for she did not conceal from her parents that their humble station was an annoyance to her. Jim—well, he was in heaven. It was sinful to rebel against God, but she couldn't help it if she went on thinking this way; and, after all, she had Bessie. She took up the paper and read. She read an account of a royal wedding, not omitting the detailed descriptions of the ladies' dresses; then the story of a shipwreck. Then a paragraph about a murderer caught her eye. It was a motiveless murder, committed on a countrywoman near a town about ten miles distant. The murderer, supposed to be an escaped lunatic, had not been caught. It was suggested that he had concealed himself in a string of empty hay-barges which were being towed up to Church Milton. Elisabeth was far from being timid where she herself was concerned, but she was,

like most really maternal women, unreasonably so on her children's account. She had seen the hay-barges pass that morning. They were now lying in the bend of the river, just above where the canal comes in. She clutched the paper tight, having a sudden vision of the lunatic, a stealthy figure, creeping out of a barge in the dusk. He might be lurking now by the causeway, in the quaggy ditch, where the reeds grow high, or behind a thorn-bush. The idea that father would be with Bessie reassured her. Just then she heard the back door open. A heavy step paused in the passage, did not come in, but tramped up the creaking stairs into the bedroom overhead. It was certainly Tom's step; but where was Bessie? He was to have spent the evening with Mr. Filkins and brought her home when the entertainment was over.

Elisabeth went up-stairs. Her husband was seated on a wooden box and leaning back against the wall. He was stupid with drink.

"Why have you come home without Bessie, father?" she asked, sharply.

"I wasn't a-going to stay at Church Milton 'alf the night waiting for 'er," returned Tom, beginning to fumble at his waistcoat buttons preparatory to undressing. "It's a fine night. She'll get some one to see her along the caus'ay."

"And that murdering lunatic about in the fields, very like! Thomas, I can't rely upon you for nothing. You've been getting a drink somewhere, and you've clean forgotten about Bessie. And if she's murdered to-night, whose fault will it be, I should like to know?"

Thomas stared, dull-eyed. The contingency was not very probable, and he unlaced his boots while his wife talked about the murderer and the hay-barge. When she pressed him to return to Church Milton, he said nothing, but kicked them off.

"Then I suppose I must do it myself, just the same as everything else in this 'ouse," said she, with a bitterness that his most serious offences had long ceased to rouse in her; and she shut the door behind her sharply.

Snatching a dark gray shawl and a black mushroom hat from a peg by the back door, she hurried across the fields in the direction of the ferry. By the time she had reached it she was tired, for it was long since she had walked so far. Pale wreaths of mist floated along the surface of the river and the meadows, but did not rise higher. The sky was full of faint moonlight, and the stars twinkled through it. The yellow lights of the town showed in the distance, and even the tall spire, ghostly and dim. On the other side of the river the white causeway lay straight, barred at intervals with black shadows. Not a leaf stirred, and there was no sound except the baa-ing of a wakeful sheep, and the trickle of the water through the chinks in the lock gates. Her agitation suddenly appeared to her to be foolish. She thought she would turn into the Round House and see Catharine, whom she had not seen since her return from the hospital. There was neither blind nor curtain to the window of the Round House. A petroleum lamp stood on the rickety table in the middle of the room, and by its light she could see the old woman sitting on a low stool before the fire, smoking a pipe. The door was unlatched, and she went in. Catharine greeted her less

cordially than she had expected, and, seating herself again on the stool, relit her pipe, with furtive sidelong glances. Elisabeth talked about her illness and the hospital, without receiving any response, and went on to explain that she had come out to meet Bessie. Bessie's name reached old Catharine's consciousness. It kindled a spark in her narrow deep-sunken eye. She took the pipe out of her mouth, held it up in her left hand, and grasped Elisabeth's knee with the other small knotty hand, looking up half defiantly into her face.

"Yes, I seen Bessie," she said; "I seen her——" The rest was inarticulate.

Elisabeth sat up in the beehive chair, into which she had sunk. "What about Bessie?" she asked. "Where have you seen her?"

Catharine laughed hoarsely.

"Seen Bessie—ay, seen Bessie!" she screamed, with a sudden unmodulated burst of voice, and put the pipe back in her mouth.

"Where?" asked Elisabeth, startled and vaguely alarmed.

Catharine pulled at her pipe, pushing about the ashes in the grate with a stick.

"Where did you see Bessie?" repeated Elisabeth, loud and slow.

"Alone in the kitchen at night with the young man," Catharine meant to say; but nothing was distinct except the words "alone," "night," "man."

Elisabeth turned pale and pulled on the shawl, which was falling from her shoulders.

"Saw her and him together again this evening, out there," croaked Catharine, pointing out of the window. "You were mad to leave 'em, Mrs. Vyne,—mad."

"Oh, I do wish she'd speak plain!" groaned Elisabeth to herself, hearing only the sinister "mad, mad," and possessed once more by the terror of the lunatic.

She had risen from her chair, and pointed in the direction of the Manor. "Did she go that way."

Catharine shook her head. She too got up and drew Elisabeth to the window, meaning to point to the causeway, where she had seen Geoffrey and Bessie exchanging a few words on their way to the town. But, clutching Elisabeth's arm with a sudden chuckle, she cried out something indistinctly. The moon was low, yet there was light enough to see the figure of a man in the punt on the other side of the ferry. When first they caught sight of him he was leaning over the rope, quite motionless, but in a moment his arm swung up, and Elisabeth could hear—for the door was ajar—the swish-swish of a stick coming down upon a thicket of tall feathery reeds that grew by the river bank. Again and again he struck at them, with swinging blows. Elisabeth turned cold as she watched him. Who but a madman would strike like that at senseless things? In a minute the man turned, jumped out of the punt, and went off along the causeway at a run. In another moment Elisabeth was out of the door, with Catharine at her side, pulling at the running rope which brought the punt across the river. When it bumped against the wooden landing-place, she jumped in, screaming to Catharine to stop behind. Yet she was not sorry when the old

woman followed her in. There were times when Catharine appeared to her half childish; at others she felt her to be sharper-witted than herself. When they reached the other side, Catharine held up her finger where Elisabeth could see it, and said, "Sh! sh!" distinctly. They hurried along the causeway, Elisabeth pausing occasionally to peer behind the reeds and thorn-bushes that grew beside it. Old Catharine kept close behind, sometimes pulling her and muttering indistinguishable remonstrances or explanations. When they reached the little gate leading into the high-road, Elisabeth leaned against it exhausted, wiping the perspiration from her face. There was no sign of any human creature except Catharine and herself. To the right was the long bridge leading to the town, and opposite them the road to the railway station. The green and red lights were plainly visible. The strange man had totally disappeared. Elisabeth returned to the Ferry to rest, leaving Catharine to watch and wait for Bessie. She sat down in the punt, wrapping her gray shawl round her. The moon went down, and the stars brightened overhead. The time seemed long, and she began to blame herself for leaving Catharine alone, when at length she saw something moving noiselessly towards her along the causeway, flitting through the shadow of the thorn-bushes at her side. For a moment she was startled,—perhaps she remembered that the place was haunted,—then, her nerves being steady, she saw it was Catharine. Catharine jumped into the punt, laid her finger twice on Elisabeth's lips, and immediately began pulling across the river, with all the force of her fibrous little arms. Elisabeth pulled too, half puzzled, half alarmed, thinking the madman was on their heels. But when they reached the other side, instead of taking refuge in the Round House, Catharine pulled her into an old wooden boat-house that stood right against the landing-stage.

Elisabeth spoke in her ear: "What's the matter, Catharine?"

For all reply the bony fingers clutched her tight and gave her an impatient shake.

"Sh! sh!" reiterated Catharine, and, clapping her hand on Elisabeth's mouth, kept it there.

Elisabeth did not share the silent but deep-rooted belief of her less intelligent neighbors in Catharine's occult powers. Yet, standing there in the dark, with the clammy little hand on her mouth, she felt an instinctive half-superstitious shrinking from her companion.

She heard steps and a low murmur of voices on the other side of the river. The rope rattled, and through a chink in the plank wall of the boat-house she could see the punt moving out over the pale surface of the water. When it came back there were two dark figures in it; no madman, but a harmless pair of intertwined lovers, silhouetted against the gleaming river.

What could have frightened Catharine? Elisabeth pulled the clinging hand from her mouth impatiently. Then a voice said,—her own child's voice, yet strange in her ears,—

"Oh, Geoffrey, don't let's go home! I know I shall wake and find it all a dream. It can't be real—it can't be."

The man's head—it was the same man whom Elisabeth had taken

for a madman—was bowed over the girl's, and for a moment, covering her face with kisses, he did not speak. Then his answer came muffled, for his lips were in her hair.

"Isn't it real, Bessie? Isn't it? As to going home, I'll stop here all night, if you like."

"No, no, darling, I didn't mean it. I'm sure I don't hardly know what I'm saying. Look! There's old Catharine's door ajar. Oh, Geoffrey, I do hope she won't see us."

A long ray of light fell from the half-open door of the Round House. It slanted down the bank and just touched the water behind them.

"Confound old Catharine!" said Geoffrey, without looking round.

"I say, Bessie, I don't believe you've told me yet whether you love me."

Even in that dim light the passionate tightening of Bessie's arms about her lover was perceptible as she answered,—and her voice was broken into a sweet kind of discord,—

"Ah, Geoffrey, you know—I do, do love you. And I never could tell you how much,—not if I was to try all my life."

There was a pause, filled with murmured caresses. Elisabeth was staring stupidly through a wide chink that happened to be on a level with her eyes. Catharine, stooping down, had her eye to another; but she kept her hand on Elisabeth's arm, and pinched it from time to time when anything of particular interest appeared to her to be going forward.

Bessie spoke again in reply to some inaudible word of Geoffrey's:

"Really, darling? Are you sure?"

Geoffrey raised his head and gave a short laugh.

"If I wasn't sure before, I've been sure enough since Saturday. I simply can't live without you, Bessie. I've had a deuce of a time trying to, and I don't mean trying any more. I can tell you it was pretty beastly this evening, having to do the agreeable to those rectory girls, and not daring even to look at you, my own darling pretty girl. I made a bolt for it, and then—well, somehow I had a feeling I should meet you."

"I didn't mind—not much, at least. I liked being in the same room with you," said Bessie, softly. "But it seemed dreadful dull after you left, so I just slipped out. The others will be out soon, and some of the Old Milton people are sure to come home this way. We mustn't stop here, Geoffrey. Oh, what shall we do if old Catharine sees us?"

"She won't—not she!" returned Geoffrey, with cheerful conviction, helping Bessie out of the punt. "Besides, it don't matter two straws if she does."

They walked quickly away towards the lock.

Elisabeth stood in the entrance to the boat-house looking after them. She had not been deliberately eavesdropping, but her mind worked slowly and had for the moment been paralyzed. Even now, as she walked mechanically into the open space before the house, she was like one dazed. A dry cackle of laughter startled her. She

turned sharply. The ray of light from the open door fell upon Catharine, doubled up with triumphant merriment at the success of her ambush. The knitted cross-over had fallen from her yellow head, and her white face was so wrinkled with laughter that her eyes had momentarily disappeared.

"What is there to laugh at, Crazy Kate?" asked Elisabeth, with sudden irritation.

"Told you! Told you!" cried Catharine, gesticulating after the vanished lovers.

IX.

Elisabeth opened the back door of the Manor with a nervous slowness, as though she herself were the detected culprit. To her relief, there was no one down-stairs; both Bessie and Geoffrey had gone to their bedrooms; and she went to her own. She kept vigil by the side of Thomas, who was sleeping heavily, and heard the night go by and the dawn come. Her body lay quite motionless, but her brain worked all the time. She recalled the peaceful years she had spent in the Meades' service, their forbearance with Thomas, and their great kindness to herself through all her troubles. She recalled, too, the joy in their house when the long-desired son and heir was born, and foresaw what a heart-break it would be to them if their son married her daughter,—Tom Vyne's daughter. On the other hand, if Geoffrey were only amusing himself,—she did not for a moment accuse him of a worse design,—that was a thing which she on her side would not suffer. And over and over again she fell to wondering how Bessie could have kept this secret from her,—a secret which old Catharine, and perhaps others, already knew.

At half-past five Thomas went out to milk the cows. About six she came out of the bedroom into the passage, and found herself face to face with Geoffrey. This was surprising, as he was not usually an early riser. He looked pale. A happy lover may be pale, but Geoffrey was also haggard and had black lines under his eyes. He too had passed a wakeful night, and it was not even the first. For several days he had been tasting the discomforts of complex being, of a house divided against itself; he whose being up to this time had been of the simplest and most solid unity. Yesterday evening his passion for Bessie had completely conquered, and he had triumphed in its conquest. During the night his normal self had reaffirmed its existence,—a self not much more reasoning than the passionate one, but having a good grip of the plainer facts of life. Something in Mrs. Vyne's eye made him blush when he met it; yet he knew he had nothing to be ashamed of before her, for he meant to marry Bessie, whatever the consequences.

Elisabeth, embarrassed by the immediateness of an interview which she had fancied still some hours distant, made a perfunctory remark on his early rising. He threw a towel which he had in his hand round his neck, and answered that, as the morning was fine, he was going to

bathe: so went down the creaking stairs, followed by Elisabeth. When he reached the bottom she asked him to come into the kitchen for a minute. He did so. She closed the door slowly behind her, and they stood looking at each other, both silent and pale in the pale morning light. The sober cheerful kitchen looked cheerless and dissipated in it, with the gray ashes on the hearth, and everything as it had been left the evening before.

"Well, Elisabeth?" interrogated Geoffrey, and rearranged the towel round his neck with an impatient pull.

She had always before thought him like her "little Missus," but now he looked "the very moral" of the Squire out of temper. The old habit of deference to gentlefolks in general and the Meades in particular had never detracted from Elisabeth's personal dignity; but it made it difficult for her to speak to Geoffrey with the authority of a mother speaking to her daughter's lover.

"Please, sir,"—fidgiting with a pin in the corner of her apron-bodice,—*"I wish to tell you as I know you're courting our Bessie, and I can't allow it, Mr. Geoffrey, indeed I can't."*

"I've not the least objection to your knowing I'm in love with your daughter, Elisabeth," returned Geoffrey, stiff and flushed: "of course I intend to marry her."

"No, no, Mr. Geoffrey! don't you go for to talk like that. You know well enough your pa and ma would never give their consent to your doing so."

"Perhaps not, Elisabeth. But, as I don't happen to be a little boy in pinafores still, as I was when you used to know me, I fancy I shall take my own way in the matter."

"It would be a most improper match for you to make, sir, and come to no good, I'm sure. We do owe a deal to your pa and ma, Tom and all of us, and I must insist that you do go away and think no more of our girl."

"You don't seem to care much about *her* feelings," replied Geoffrey, indignantly; "but I've no earthly intention of sacrificing her to your views of what's right and proper, or even to my own people's. Why, a chap I know jilted a girl not long ago, and she died of a broken heart before the year was out. How would you like it if I behaved in that scoundrelly way to Bessie, poor little dear, and she died of it?"

"I suppose her as died, sir, was a young lady. I don't think our Bessie would."

"Good heavens! You mean to say you fancy a lady would have more feeling than your own daughter? The chances are she wouldn't have so much. If Bessie were a young lady she'd know scores of chaps like me. But as it is—why, poor little darling! I'm the only man in the world to her. You mayn't believe it, but she cares for me—well, a thousand times more than I deserve, and I'm not going to break her heart, though her own mother does seem to wish it."

"I don't say but what it would be a bad business for my girl, sir," replied Elisabeth, with a troubled brow; "but if you do go away at oncet she'll forget about it. There's a young man drives Mr. Filkins's

cart and helps in the shop, as is most faithful and fond, I'm sure. I make no doubt she'll take to him after a bit, if you do go away."

The idea of Bessie declining on the charms of Mr. Filkins's young man, however absurd, was the reverse of persuasive to her lover.

"You don't know Bessie as well as I do," he said, dryly.

"Have you promised her marriage?" asked Elisabeth.

"Of course it's understood. One doesn't haggle over words, like an attorney. However, I intend to have the whole matter out with Bessie to-day and get all our plans settled before I speak to my parents. It might even save fuss in the long run to be married at once before letting them know about it."

Elisabeth looked horror.

"I'm not a child. I'm of age, and have a hundred a year of my own. She'd marry me on that, bless her!"

"Oh, sir! you'll drive your pa and ma crazy!" cried Elisabeth. "I can't have you engage yourself to my girl, let alone marry her, without letting them know about it."

"If you don't wish me to be engaged to your daughter, Mrs. Vyne, I—well, I'll look for other lodgings to-day," returned Geoffrey, moving towards the front door. "Of course you can forbid Bessie to speak to me, but I warn you I don't in the least believe she'll obey you."

He put his thumb on the latch, and, pausing, turned round with a little angry laugh.

"I can't imagine what you've got to find fault with, all the same. Any one would think I was playing fast-and-loose with your daughter; but I tell you again, I mean to marry her. Only, under the circumstances, I shall choose my own time for telling my people, and, if you've any consideration for Bessie, you'll leave the matter like that."

Geoffrey flung out of the room and up the garden steps. He was naturally quick-tempered, and this morning his nerves were out of tune. Perhaps, too, the necessity for discussing his private affairs with his mother's quondam servant brought home to him unpleasantly the precise consequences of the step he was about to take. In dealing with his father's tenantry and dependants in general, Geoffrey had an unobtrusive consciousness of innate superiority which was far from militating against his popularity with them. They liked "a gentleman to be a gentleman," and the grooms and gamekeepers in particular would have given little for a young master who did not prove himself one by swearing at them from time to time, when everything did not go perfectly right in the stable or the coverts.

The morning was sunshiny, and the mist of the night before floated along the meadows in a bright transparent haze. The curves of the river flashed through it, and a row of distant windows on the outskirts of Church Milton flashed too in the low eastern sun. As Geoffrey walked towards the river, Thomas Vyne was coming slowly along the meadow path, his shoulders bowed under a wooden yoke, from either end of which hung a tin pail full of foaming milk. He wore a short blue smock, and a shapeless felt hat was pushed back from his unshaven face, still sodden with yesterday's drink.

Why, Geoffrey asked himself, with the fancifulness of a lover, could

not his Bessie grow alone, like a flower beside his path, to be plucked and worn in his bosom, without question from himself or any one else as to the stock from which she sprang?

X.

At ten o'clock that morning Elisabeth Vyne was walking up the drive to the Meades' house. On looking round the kitchen somewhat absently, after Geoffrey's discouraging exit, her eye had lighted on the clock, and it occurred to her that she had just time to catch a carrier's cart which would drop her in the neighborhood of the station. To communicate with Geoffrey's parents as soon as possible seemed her best course, and she started at once. It was only now, as she was nearing the end of her journey, that she began to wonder whether she had not been too precipitate in coming away without speaking to Bessie. Yet it might have made her task more difficult for her; and, after all, it was Bessie's fault for having left her to find this thing out by chance. As to Thomas, she was too used to managing the affairs of the family to have any scruples on his account, and she knew only too well on which side his influence would have been exerted.

Thus, full of discomfiting thoughts, she walked up the long drive, through the pretty park, its undulations dotted with the red and white of grazing cattle, over the bridge across the ornamental water, and so, with a glimpse of trim garden through a laurel hedge, to the front of the house. It was a big white house with a portico, neither beautiful nor venerable, yet with a certain substantial dignity of its own. Except that some of the shrubs had become trees, the place was unaltered in every detail since she had first seen it thirty-odd years before. Elisabeth was moved, whether pleasurably or painfully she hardly knew, by this unalteredness,—which was in truth the form in which Squire Meade's character had stamped itself on his surroundings. It seemed like a dream, a fantastic dream, that her Bessie might one day be mistress of this big house, sweeping in her carriage-and-pair up that drive where Elisabeth was wont to trudge afoot, stepping aside and courtesying when that same carriage passed by. Elisabeth would not have been human if the thought had brought her no pleasure, if it had not crossed her mind that there was a point of view from which she was doing a foolish thing in coming here to-day in opposition to Mr. Geoffrey's expressed wish. Nevertheless she went on. Yet it may have been owing to the subtle influence of such thoughts—that instead of turning off towards the back of the house she went straight on to the portico and rang the clanging bell of the great mahogany door. The smart young footman who appeared in answer to it did not look pleased when he saw what class of person it was who had rung at the front door, thus obliging him very hastily—the Squire was furious if a visitor rung twice—to tear off his apron and plunge into his livery coat. There was, however, a certain dignity and self-possession about Mrs. Vyne which prevented him from expressing his feelings of disgust.

She sat down in a high-backed chair in the large inner hall. She had sometimes seen a poor woman sitting there in old days, when the baize door dividing the hall from the servants' quarters had swung open. The polished floor which reflected everything upon it like still water, the large oak table, the skins and savage weapons on the walls, the palms in the *jardinière*,—everything was just the same. And on the landing where the wide double staircase divided, the tall Dutch clock chimed the hours as silvery and punctual as ever. It was too incongruous to picture Bessie descending those stairs in the place of the small figure, erect and graceful still under its crisp white hair, that came gliding down with a little rustle of silk to greet Elisabeth. There was a somewhat troubled surprise in Mrs. Meade's welcome.

"Is there anything wrong? Is Mr. Geoffrey ill?"

Elisabeth had risen from her seat.

"Oh, no, ma'am. I left him just going a-bathing before his breakfast."

"Bathing before breakfast, so late in the season! You really shouldn't let him do that, Elisabeth. Don't you remember what dreadful colds in the head he gets?"

"I'm afraid 'tis not in my power, ma'am, to prevent a young gentleman like Master Geoffrey from doing what he pleases," replied Elisabeth, her thoughts remote from bathing and colds in the head.

Mrs. Meade laughed gently. "Of course not. But Mr. Geoffrey's such a good boy with his mother that I find it hard to remember he's really quite a man. However, you mustn't stand talking here, Elisabeth: I was forgetting you'd been ill. Come into the drawing-room."

The drawing-room was a large room, expensively upholstered in past fashion, and containing nothing of real beauty except hot-house flowers and a Sir Joshua of the Meade who had founded the family fortunes. But to Elisabeth it represented the climax of elegance and splendor. Outside, the gardener was mowing the lawn. The whirring noise of the machine and the smell of the cut grass came in at the open window with the sunshine and the morning air. Whenever Elisabeth heard the sound of the mowing-machine it always reminded her of this house where it used to be so constantly in her ears as she went about her work. She looked round, wondering which of the gilded chairs to sit upon, and at last chose the most uncomfortable one. Mrs. Meade subsided into a low sofa.

"Now, Elisabeth," she said, kindly, leaning forward and placing the tips of her slender fingers together, "tell me what's the matter. I was in hopes Thomas had got pretty steady and you were doing well now."

"So he is, ma'am. It's not that sort of trouble I'm in. If it was a matter of money I wouldn't come to you and the Squire again, not if I wanted it ever so. I'm sure I wish I'd never accepted of your bounty."

"Elisabeth!" exclaimed Mrs. Meade, in astonishment. "How can you talk like that, when you know it was a pleasure to us to help you? You're not a bit like yourself."

"Maybe I'm not, ma'am, for I'm greatly troubled in my mind.

You see it's like this, Mrs. Meade. You put your son into my charge, thinking, as well you might, after all you and the Squire had done for we, as I'd be faithful to your trust; but I wasn't: I went into the hospital and left him."

"Of course you did," interrupted Mrs. Meade, soothing, yet anxious. "We couldn't have wished you to stop at home and be seriously ill. You said Geoffrey was quite well. Surely he's not been getting into mischief?"

"That's just what he's been doing, ma'am. And it wouldn't have happened if I'd been at home."

"But what? What wouldn't have happened?" urged Mrs. Meade. She clasped and unclasped her fingers nervously, and the big diamonds of her rings, catching the sunshine, sent jewels of colored light sparkling across the furniture and up onto the white ceiling.

"Well, I'm sorry to say, ma'am, Master Geoffrey's been courting our Bessie."

"Bessie?" repeated Mrs. Meade, vaguely.

"That's our youngest daughter. I can't say how long they've been a-courting together. I knew naught of it till last night."

"Of course it's very tiresome of Geoffrey," said Mrs. Meade, with something like relief, "but you may be quite sure he would never do anything wrong,—seriously wrong, I mean; for he's no right whatever to go turning the head of a girl in your daughter's position."

"As to that, ma'am," returned Elisabeth, grimly, "I reckon my daughter's turned his head for un fine. He swears he'll have her to his wedded wife and ask no man's consent."

There was a pause. Then Mrs. Meade spoke again, in a low voice:

"But it's madness! Good heavens, Elisabeth! you know it's out of the question."

"I do know it, ma'am. I told un only this morning it was a most unproper match for him, and one to which his pa would never consent. But Master Geoffrey, ma'am, do take after his pa; he's a bit masterful, and the more I said the less he minded my words. I couldn't persuade him to tell you and the Squire of his intentions, and I was a'most feared as he and Bessie might get married on the sly, knowing as neither you nor us could approve of their keeping company together. So I thought it best to come and tell you how matters were, without delay."

There was again a silence. Mrs. Meade leaned forward and laid her soft little hands on Elisabeth's rough ones.

"You dear good Elisabeth!" she said.

A slight tremor passed across Elisabeth's face, but she did not answer by word or look.

"Of course we couldn't think of allowing it," continued Mrs. Meade, gently. "But we shall always be grateful to you for behaving like this,—for letting us know at once."

"I couldn't have done different, ma'am. Anyways, I couldn't with a young gentleman in my house. But with you and the Squire—and Tom's having behaved as he did in your service—no, I couldn't. But

then there's my daughter,"—and the tremor came back,—“such a good child as she've always been. It do seem unnatural as I should be working against her happiness and prosperity.”

“Does she love him very much?” asked Mrs. Meade, stroking Elisabeth's hands.

Elisabeth nodded in the affirmative.

“Poor child!” said Mrs. Meade, softly.

“Oh, she'll forget it right enough,” returned Elisabeth, with a touch of impatience in her voice; “but I suppose she won't believe me when I tell her so, for she's but young. It's this way I feel it so hard, ma'am. Bessie and me have always lived 'appy together, without ever having a difference; but I do fear when I go home and tell her my errand here she'll take it unkind and think me a cruel mother.”

“She may be angry at first, poor girl, but she'll soon see you did right.”

“Do you think she will, ma'am?” asked Elisabeth, wistfully. “Bessie's the last of my fam'ly as I've got left,” she said; and a short sob heaved her broad breast. Mrs. Meade rose and kissed her.

A heavy tread, the tread of a big man in big shooting-boots, resounded on the two wide stone steps which divided the house from the garden. A rough terrier, with his coat full of burrs, rushed in, snuffing with joy at seeing his mistress again after a prolonged absence of half an hour, and wriggling his body about on the carpet in postures of shamelessly abject humility. At the same time a big hand threw the heavy sash up higher, and the Squire came in, in his loose shooting-coat and blue tie.

“Hullo, Mrs. Vyne!” he said. “How did you get here? How are you?”

Elisabeth stood up and answered civilly, but there were traces of tears about her eyes.

“In trouble again? Why, the Missus told me you'd got upsides with that husband of yours and made a decent fellow of him at last.”

“'Tis not about him, sir,” Elisabeth answered, slowly. “'Tis about Master Geoffrey.” And she looked at Mrs. Meade.

The Squire looked too, and saw traces of tears in his wife's eyes as well as in Mrs. Vyne's. His face, exuberantly rosy between its white whiskers, took on a slightly yellow tinge under the red.

“What's the matter with the lad?” he asked, sharply. “An accident?”

“No, no. He's quite well,” returned Mrs. Meade, hastily. She sat down on the sofa and again shaded her face with her hand.

“What about him? Got into a scrape?”

Mrs. Meade answered, faintly, “Yes.”

“Young ass! How the deuce has he contrived to do that? Been poaching, Mrs. Vyne, or what?”

Elisabeth looked again at Mrs. Meade, but she made no response. As much of her face as could be seen was very pale.

“Come, Mrs. Vyne,” said the Squire, impatiently, “out with it. It's not murder, I suppose?”

Elisabeth began. "My daughter, sir,"—she said,—“your son, sir,—my daughter Bessie—” and paused.

Standing in that sumptuous drawing-room, face to face with the Squire himself, it seemed Elisabeth found it an impossible thing to say, “Your son is engaged to marry my daughter.”

The Squire’s face became stern.

“Do you mean to say my son’s been behaving like a damnable scoundrel to your daughter?”

“No, no, sir. Don’t you go thinking that. I’ve never suspected un of any dishonest dealing with my girl. If I had,”—and there was a thrill of maternal fierceness in Elisabeth’s voice,—“I should be acting very different from what I am. No, sir; but it seems Master Geoffrey got to courting our Bessie while I was laid up in hospital.”

“Why the deuce did you go there, then?”

The Squire was a good master, but he never could help resenting it when a servant was ill at an inconvenient time.

“They were not alone, sir; and the doctor he said——”

“Confound doctors! They’re humbugs, the whole lot of them. Look at me. I never take a drop of their physic. You’d far better have stayed at home, Mrs. Vyne, and given that daughter of yours something to do.”

There was something in the Squire’s way of saying “that daughter of yours” which Elisabeth did not like.

“My girl’s as hard-working and stiddy a girl as any in the country, sir,” she said.

“Well, well!” returned the Squire, impatiently. “But you women, as usual, are making a precious sight too much fuss over a silly love-affair. I don’t say the young fool behaved well in flirting with a girl in your daughter’s position, Mrs. Vyne, but after all it ain’t of much consequence.”

“Mr. Geoffrey’s not been as you may say flirting, sir. He’s set upon marrying our Bessie.”

There was an ominous pause. Then—

“What?” roared the Squire, bringing his fist down on a rosewood table with a force that shook every ornament in the room.

There was no reply, and after a minute he began again, in an ominous growl.

“Do you mean to tell me, Mrs. Vyne, that my son talks of marrying your daughter?”

“Indeed he do, sir.”

“If you think I shall allow him—young idiot! infernal ass!—if you fancy we shall let him be caught by a girl in your daughter’s position,—Tom Vyne’s daughter, too,—you and your precious husband are uncommonly mistaken.”

“It’s you, sir, are mistaken in thinking my daughter or us to blame,” replied Elisabeth, with spirit. “She’s not one to look after young gentlemen——”

“I don’t care who’s most to blame,” interrupted the Squire, his voice rising, “though I’ve got my own opinion of a girl who can’t keep in her own station. It was your fault for going away, leaving ’em, and

now you may just go home and tell my jackanapes that I'll see him d——d first."

"I told him so, sir, but he did seem to think 'twas no matter."

It was impossible to say whether Elisabeth spoke in mere simplicity or with a touch of irony.

The veins swelled on the Squire's temples and neck, the red of his complexion turned to purple. He strode into the middle of the room and broke into an exclamation that was more like a roar.

Mrs. Meade rose and staggered towards him. Her head was thrown back, her face a dull white and contracted with pain, and the dark shade round her mouth had deepened almost to black. Her hands were clasped convulsively against her breast.

"Don't, don't, dear!" she gasped, "when Elisabeth has come on purpose—— Oh!"

The purple died out of the Squire's face. He caught his wife in his arms.

"What is it? What is it, darling?" he asked; but he knew.

"Ring the bell, Mrs. Vyne," he cried. "Send for Clemson. Tell James to ride for the doctor as hard as he can go. Open the door; open the door, please."

And when Elisabeth had opened the door, he carried his wife tenderly up-stairs.

A hurrying to and fro and a ringing of bells followed.

Presently the Squire came down again. His cheeks could not go pale, but his forehead was wrinkled, his gray eyes were dull and sunken. He looked ten years older than when he and the terrier had stepped in at the drawing-room window. He sat down hastily at the writing-table and took out a telegram form.

"I am sending a wire to my son," he said, writing as he spoke. "His tomfoolery may have killed his mother, for all I know; but I suppose he'll come when he's sent for. He's fond enough of her, I'll say that for him."

"Oh, sir, what is the matter with the Missus?" asked Elisabeth, anxiously.

"Heart," answered the Squire. "She's been so before, but never so bad."

He handed the telegram to the footman.

"Take Mrs. Vyne to the housekeeper's room and give her some lunch," he said.

"No, thank you, sir. I must be starting, or I shall miss the train. But you'll let me know about the Missus?"

"Yes, yes. And wait: you can have the cart to the station. Now go along with you to the housekeeper's room,—do, there's a good woman."

He nodded farewell, his thoughts too full of his wife to allow him to discuss further his son's misdemeanor. He went up-stairs, but did not enter his wife's room; she could not bear him there. He stood outside the door, listening, listening to every sound that reached him from within.

XI.

Bessie could not sleep for happiness in the first part of the night, and this caused her to lie late next morning. When she came down, she was not so much puzzled by her mother's absence as she might have been, because she supposed her to have gone to Mr. Filkins to see some cows he was thinking of buying for the farm. Geoffrey came in calmed and refreshed by a splash in the cool river and a paddle in his canoe up its still reaches and back-waters. He found Bessie plying her broom, with eyes more softly shining, a more attractive blush, and a smile more shyly sweet than any Cinderella expectant of her fairy prince. And the prince forgot his royal parents, the stepmotherly Mrs. Vyne, and all those modern obstacles, more formidable than witches and dragons, which lay in the path along which he must bring his bride. He alluded to Mrs. Vyne's opposition to their engagement, while telling Bessie of his own determination to have their marriage and future plans arranged before mentioning it to his father, whom he described as "an awfully decent old chap, but uncommon fond of his own way, and choke-full of prejudices, don't you know." This was strictly true, but Geoffrey had never thought much about the Squire's prejudices before, because he himself shared most of them. Bessie was hurt, but not surprised, to hear of her mother's opposition. She knew Elisabeth's loyalty to the Meades, though not the whole reason for it, and was enough a child of her age to regard Elisabeth's feeling towards them as exaggerated, and even undignified.

Geoffrey went to Mr. Dangerfield at the usual hour, and when the telegram came Bessie sent it after him. He came flying back on his bicycle, pale and breathless, with the news of his mother's illness. He must put a few things in a bag, and then the rectory pony-cart would call and take him to the station. There was not a moment to be lost if he was to catch the twelve-fifty train. While Bessie was helping him to pack, he observed that this was the last moment in which to mention their engagement to his parents, as it would dangerously agitate his mother. Bessie must cheer up and take care of herself and not mind what her mother said, but write to him every day. He gave her a hasty hug and ran off bag in hand along the farm-track to the high-road, to meet the pony-cart. Bessie watched him go with a pang such as she had never felt before. It was as though her heart-strings were twined about him and every step he took dragged at them. Not only was her lover going away, but he was going away into a world that was strange and, as she dimly guessed, everyway hostile to her.

He was gone, and the Manor House seemed very empty.

About two o'clock Elisabeth came in. She had walked from the station, and was hot and tired. She sank down wearily in the first chair by the door and undid her cape and bonnet-strings.

"Well, you have managed to pick up a lot of dust!" said Bessie, taking the black cashmere cape from her mother's shoulders and turning it round in her hands. "And your bonnet, too! What ever have you been a-doing with it?"

Elisabeth had quite forgotten the sprightly red carnations by

means of which Bessie had endeavored to give an air of fashion to her flat black bonnet, and, leaning her sad and weary head in a corner of the railway carriage, had managed to crush all the spirit out of them. She unpinned her bonnet and looked at it with a grim little smile before laying it down on the dresser.

"You see it ain't no use to try and make me fine, my girl," she said. "I warn't brought up to it, and I can't keep myself so. I do hope there'll never come a day when I shall make 'ee ashamed of me, Bessie."

Bessie had been nursing a grievance against her mother all the morning, but the sight of the kind familiar face had somehow banished her bitter thoughts. Now as she kneeled down to unbutton Elisabeth's boots, bending over her task so as to hide a conscious blush, she answered, with tender vehemence,—

"Don't you go talking nonsense, mother. If I was to be made the queen to-morrow, I should always be proud of my mother, for I don't believe as there's many equal to her. But you haven't said where you've been. Was it to look at them cows Uncle Filkins talked of?"

"No, my dear; I've been to see Squire and Mrs. Meade, about a matter as concerns you, and when I've rested a bit and had a cup of tea I'll have a talk with 'ee about it, though 'tis nothing very pleasant I have to tell."

Bessie's brow darkened. She finished taking off the boots in silence. Elisabeth resumed:

"You'll know of your own self as Squire wasn't best pleased to hear how you and Master Geoffrey had been courting. How he did go on, to be sure! And as to my old missus, why, Bessie, it have pretty near killed her to hear on it."

"You'd no business to go interfering, mother," said Bessie, hotly. "You should have left Geoffrey to tell his parents himself. You may have killed Mrs. Meade, telling her as we were engaged like that."

"I don't know as she'd have took it better if Mr. Geoffrey had told her as you wer married," returned Elisabeth, dryly, and, rising, left the room.

When she came in again, Bessie was sitting by the window, sewing. She remained silent, and Elisabeth took the wooden elbow-chair by the fireplace and drank her tea, ruminating the while. Bessie's young brain was working faster, driven by the hot blood which the passions of love and resentment were sending so strongly through her pulses.

"Mother," she said, at last, unable to contain herself any longer, "I want to know who told you there was anything between me and Mr.——me and Geoffrey."

Elisabeth, whose eyes had been absently fixed on the hearth, turned them slowly on her daughter.

"My dear," she said, "nobody told me. I saw 'ee myself."

"What did you see?" cried Bessie. "There was nothing to see till last night."

"Well, I went out for to meet 'ee, seeing as father he wouldn't go, and then I—I see you and Mr. Geoffrey at the Ferry."

Bessie was silent a minute, stitching with trembling fingers. Then, with the tremor of battle in her voice, "I don't know what's come to people, I'm sure. 'Tis nothing but crouching and spying and mischief-making nowadays. There's old Catharine peeping and spying while you was in hospital, and then as soon as ever you're back you come spying on me yourself. I didn't see no one at the Ferry," and Bessie colored with shame and anger at the idea of an unseen spectator, "but if you was there, why didn't you speak?"

As Bessie flushed, Elisabeth went pale, with the sick pallor of weariness and advancing years. She had heard Bessie speak sometimes to other people in that angry voice, but never before to herself.

"I don't rightly know how to explain it, my dear," she said. "I did get some sort of a maggot into my head about a crazy chap that they said was about, and old Catharine showed I where to hide from un. I never thought it was you a-coming till you was close by, and then I was that took aback, as you may say, to see 'ee and Mr. Geoffrey so and hear 'ee tork——" Up to this point Elisabeth had been apologetic, but as the recollection of the scene at the Ferry returned to her, her voice involuntarily became severe and even indignant: "Oh, fie, Bessie! how 'ee did tork! I didn't think it was in 'ee to go on that way. I don't wonder you do color up."

"It's not for shame, mother, if I do, for I've done nothing to be ashamed of. Perhaps you thought"—this fiercely—"I wasn't an honest girl. Perhaps you thought Geoffrey didn't mean to behave honorable to me."

"Nay, nay, my girl," returned Elisabeth, troubled, "I didn't exactly think that. But there was som'at I didn't 'alf like about your way wi' un. I don't think when I wer your age I'd ha' kissed so free and gone on just as you was doing with a young feller, more partic'larly in the dark and lonesome-like. There, it's a sore surprise to me that Master Geoffrey should have got into trouble in my house."

"Trouble!" repeated Bessie, putting her work down on her knee. Her nostrils dilated, and her black eyes flashed through tears of indignation. "You call it 'trouble' his wanting to marry me,—your own daughter, and one I did always think you was fond of. I don't know what you're made of, mother, to go on like this. It's for all the world as though Geoffrey were your son and I was just nothing to you. You ought to be pleased to think your daughter's going to get a good husband and be made a lady too."

"That's just what I don't hold with, Bessie," returned Elisabeth, apparently calm and unshaken by her daughter's vehemence. "In my opinion folks are a deal better keeping in their own station. You know what Milly feels about having no eddication, and it 'ud be a deal worse for you."

Bessie commented scornfully, "Education! I wonder Milly don't know by this time how much gentlemen and ladies care about that!"

Elisabeth continued, "You did ought to remember we owe a deal to my old master and missus, and one of our family should be the last to do 'em an injury."

"You always talk as though the Meades weren't made of flesh

and blood the same as ourselves," replied Bessie, "and all because they're gentry. You can't expect me to take up with such old-fashioned notions. I'm not going to do them any real injury because I'm going to marry their son. It'll hurt their pride a bit, very likely."

"It'll break their hearts, Bessie."

"Oh, mother! you don't mind breaking mine."

Elisabeth suddenly saw her daughter through a mist of tears. Her heart was full of an intense yearning which she had no means of expressing; for caresses were not in her habits or in those of her class.

"Bessie," she said, solemnly, "don't you say that. You're just all the world to me: maybe it's wrong to say so much, but it's the truth. There's nothing I'd set against my daughter's happiness,—nothing, except acting just and honorable."

Bessie was silent. Elisabeth continued,—

"It's not on account o' notions I'm going agen you, my girl; it's on account o' things that happened afore you was born. You'd ha' been born in the Union yourself, Bessie, if it hadn't been along o' Mrs. Meade."

"But one can't be bought like that for money, mother. Besides, I know you paid them back 'most all of it."

"But that's not the worst, Bessie: oh, dear! it's not the worst. I did never mean you should know, but there—you've got to. Your father made use of money as wasn't his to use. It was the master's. But Squire he wouldn't send him to prison for it; he only sent him away. Still, every one in the place knew the facts pretty well."

Bessie had been looking out of the window, but now she turned a pale face towards her mother.

"You mean father stole the Meades' money?"

"Yes. It was given him to pay bills with."

"Oh, mother, how horrid! Of course I knew father wasn't sober; but taking money! It does make one feel ashamed."

She turned away again, with her elbows on the window-sill and her chin on her hand, staring at the gay garden with blank eyes, and wiping away a few trickling tears. Elisabeth rose and came to her. She was full of pity for her child, yet relieved to have touched the right chord at last,—to have found something which could impose a check on this transforming passion which had made of Bessie something startling and even shocking in her eyes. "I knew you'd feel that way about it, Bessie," she said, laying her hand on her daughter's shoulder. "I'm mortal sorry for 'ee, my love. It do come hard on a girl at your age, especially one as was so uncommon stiddy and not one for having sweethearts. But I felt certain sure my girl would act right when she knew how we was situated."

Bessie made no reply. There were writing-materials on the window-sill, as well as a work-box. In a few minutes Elisabeth opened the inkstand and blotter and put out a quire of note-paper and a pen.

"I don't want to hurry 'ee, my dear," she said, "but we did always use to agree if 'twas a tooth to be drawn, or whatever it might be, 'twas

best to have it done and over. Hadn't you best write to Mr. Geoffrey this post, afore he's like to write to 'ee, and tell him how there are reasons, which his parents know well, why you can never marry him?"

Bessie was still mute, playing with the pen, her long downcast lashes casting delicate shadows on her cheeks. Elisabeth stood silent too,—till suddenly the girl faced round on her mother, with a hard, defiant smile.

"No, mother: I won't."

"Won't what, Bessie? What ever do the child mean?"

"I mean this, mother:—" she stood up, no longer smiling, but with black eyes ablaze in her white face: "it's all very well in a story-book for folks to give each other up because one of them's father's done something wrong and disgraced himself, but I don't believe as any one ever did it,—not any one as really cared."

"Bessie!" cried her mother, aghast, "you don't mean to say that. Surely you're going to act honorable?"

Bessie set her face. "If he sticks to me, I shall stick to him. I'm not going to give up a man as loves me, the only man in the world I shall ever care a button for, because father—father, as you know well enough, mother, has never been anything but a trouble to us all—because he disgraced himself years ago, before ever I was born. You don't understand, mother; you don't understand."

"I understand you a deal too well, Bessie," returned Elisabeth, her pity swallowed up by her indignation. "You want to behave dishonorable, that's what you want. It's dreadful to hear 'ee going on so onnat'ral, denying of your own father. Where's your conscience, girl, that you can go sacrificing all them you should love and honor, and Mr. Geoffrey himself too, to your own megrims?"

"And what do you want to sacrifice me to, when all's said and done? To pride,—your pride and their pride, which is worse, because it's nothing but worldliness. I'm not a thief. I shouldn't disgrace them. As to what you call megrims—oh, mother! I wish, I wish you'd understand!"

Bessie's defiance softened to pleading. She sank down on the low window-seat, and, flinging her arms around Elisabeth's waist, buried her face in her mother's skirt.

"It's not megrims, mother: it's love."

"Well, Bessie, you don't suppose but what a married woman of my age knows more about that nor you do. Say what you will, my dear, you'll soon get over it, and settle down comfortable with some respectable young man in your own station of life."

"What! Percy Hicks?" Bessie laughed a low sweet laugh. "Yes, p'raps I should have married him if I'd never known Geoffrey; though I can't hardly believe now there ever was a time when I didn't know Geoffrey. Fancy! I might have married Percy Hicks and gone on all my life just like you, mother, thinking love was megrims. Poor, poor mother! I mustn't be angry with you for not knowing what it's like; for I never should have myself if it hadn't been for Geoffrey. But listen, mother,"—and an enchanting softness came into her voice,—“love isn't megrims. It's the most wonderful thing in the

world, the only thing in the world; all the rest's just nothing to it. Geoffrey and I know that; we both thought of it at the same time: so what's the use of trying to persuade us it's not true? Oh, don't try and take him away from me, mother!" and she drew her breath hard, as though close on sobs: "if you do I shall die,—I shall indeed."

Elisabeth was silent, unconvinced, but seeking in vain for something to say. Bessie looked up in her face and read an answer there.

"But you can't! you can't!" she cried, in exultant defiance.

Elisabeth made no response.

Bessie went to the door. She turned and stood for a moment with her hand on the handle.

"If you did, mother," she said, deliberately, "I'd never forgive you. Mind that. I'd go down to my grave and never forgive you."

And Elisabeth heard her go slowly up the stairs and shut herself into her own room.

XII.

Elisabeth had a rigidity of principle which forbade her to buy back even her daughter's friendship at the price of the least paltering with her own conscience. Indeed, the more painful a duty became the more certainly it appeared to her to be a duty. She regarded Bessie's conduct as dishonorable, her whole frame of mind as in the last degree reprehensible. Fortunately, she did not suffer from any overmastering impulse to express her feelings. Bessie had said, "Don't let's have any more words about Geoffrey, mother. We can't never agree, and it's miserable to quarrel." Elisabeth had assented, and the compact of silence was faithfully observed. But it was the kind of silence which aches through all talk. To Elisabeth the pain of it was perpetual, for she had no interest strong enough to make her wholly forget it. Bessie had her own thoughts, and Geoffrey's letters; they came every day, and she read them ten times over. Elisabeth had no idea what news they contained, except such as related to Mrs. Meade's health. At first she kept listening for quick wheels on the track, heralding a burst of the Squire into the Manor. But as the days passed and no one came, she divined that Mrs. Meade was restraining her husband till she herself should be well enough to intervene. In ten days' time Bessie announced that she was to go to the Meades' on the following day. She pretended the utmost coolness, but the mother's quick eye noted that she was looking her worst. Her pallor lacked its usual clearness, and mingled nervousness and pride froze her features into an immobility that was almost sullen. Like all women who are accustomed to lifting and carrying weights, she was rather strongly than slenderly built. She would have looked brilliant in a dress which bared her fine throat and arms; she looked almost clumsy in a tidy black jacket fresh from the Church Milton shop. Charmian, if not Cleopatra, would have lacked distinction in a like dress and under like circumstances. Elisabeth vaguely felt the lack in Bessie, as she watched her walk away from the garden gate.

That afternoon Mrs. Filkins called, for the first time since Elisabeth's return. For Mrs. Filkins, being exceedingly partial to muffins and crumpets, had ever since the tea entertainment been suffering from three or four mortal diseases, all of them totally unconnected with so vulgar and unaccommodating an organ as the liver.

"Is your young gentleman at 'ome to-day?" she asked, taking "support" in the shape of a glass of beer and some cake. "A most haffable young feller, I'm sure."

Elisabeth explained that he was gone. She was afraid Harriet Filkins must have noticed something between Geoffrey and Bessie; and if Harriet knew, every one must know by this time.

"Gone, is he? Lor'! Bessie'll be finding it dull without him."

"Why should you say that, 'Arriet?"

"Come, you needn't fire up, Lizzie. You might be sure that with me 'ere there was nothing went on but what was perfectly lady-like. Besides, you know what Bessie is with the men. I'm really quite tired of introducing her."

"Young Hicks seems to me to be courting of her."

"Was, you might say, last January a year. But I don't suppose a young feller with good prospects like him cared to go on after a girl as was always looking over his 'ead. Now she can't do that with a gentleman like Mr. Geoffrey; and, besides, we sort of carried her along with us, he and I, we got on so famous together. You see we're both so musical. I dare say they told you what jolly evenings we 'ad, all singing away together, like so many little birds."

Elisabeth avoided admitting that she had heard nothing about it.

"I don't know as it was quite wise of you to allow that, Harriet," she said. "Mr. Geoffrey's pa and ma wouldn't be pleased, if it come to their knowledge, that he'd been mixing so familiar with folks in our station, and Bessie being but a girl, and, some folks 'ud say, good-looking too."

Mrs. Filkins choked with cake and amusement.

"Don't you flatter yourself, Lizzie. I can't 'old out no 'opes of it, my dear. Tom he come round with some silly talk about Mr. Geoffrey helping your Bessie with churning and such like; but, Lor'! a frolicsome young feller like that! Why, it's all a new game to him. I kep' my eye upon 'em the 'ole day,"—Mrs. Filkins did not realize during how large a portion of the day the said eye was closed in slumber,—“and I can tell you he didn't get on near as well with her as with me; not so free and easy, as you may say, I felt sorry for it, Lizzie, for I should like well enough to see my own niece made a lady. But I've often said it was a misfortune for hany girl to have a mother so old-fashioned in her notions and so unused to society as you. If you don't take care, that girl won't marry at all. Not but what she's nice-looking and lady-like in her manners,—she do take after our fam'ly so far,—but, Lor'! when I think of what I was among the young men at her age! And you never should have let her get such a waist. Why, my waist wasn't above seventeen and a 'alf inches until"—and so on, and so on. The waist of Mrs. Filkins's youth was a never-failing source of self-gratulation to her. It dwindled with a

rapidity hardly equalled by that with which the waist of her maturity increased.

Whatever Elisabeth might suffer in her maternal pride from her sister-in-law's outpourings,—and she had too much of the patient placidity of the peasant to be easily ruffled,—she found compensation in the assurance that Mrs. Filkins had no suspicion of the real state of affairs.

XIII.

Bessie remained away for a fortnight, staying with a spinster relative of Mrs. Meade's in the neighboring village. Mrs. Meade thought, not without reason, that Geoffrey would better realize the import of the step he desired to take if he saw Bessie Vyne among his own surroundings. She had caught or inherited something of her mother's quiet dignity of manner, and it was possible, though the Meades would not have admitted it, that in time she might lose all trace of having sprung from a lower class than their own. But at present she was obviously not a lady. The consciousness of this rendered her stiff and embarrassed in their society, although she admired Mrs. Meade and became almost at once subject to her influence. Alone with Geoffrey, all was forgotten except him; and he too was sufficiently in love to be able to conceal from her, if not to forget, the harassed state of his feelings. Unlike most only and adored sons, he was affectionate and dutiful. He wanted neither intelligence nor character, but they were both of a kind to allow of his walking contentedly in the ways, and he had never before come into collision with his parents, even in minor matters of opinion. Now honor and love called upon him to wound their tenderest feelings and traverse the whole line of their tastes and traditions.

The Squire restrained himself in a way that Elisabeth would not have credited. It was superhuman. But he bellowed savagely in his cold bath of a morning, instead of shouting vague but cheerful hymn-tunes as was his usual practice. He felt afraid of his own temper in this matter when so much was at stake, and was desirous of leaving the management of it to his wife, whose superior powers of diplomacy he recognized, and the silent influence of his own power of the purse. Yet his manner to Bessie, revealing, as it involuntarily did, his opinion of her, roused her pride; and once, in speaking to her of her father, he permitted himself much candor.

Partly in consequence of this stimulated pride of hers, and yet more owing to Mrs. Meade's milder influence, Bessie agreed to a truce. Geoffrey was to give up Oxford and travel for a year, during which time they were not to correspond. If when he returned they still loved each other, his parents would withdraw all opposition to their marriage. Bessie stood solely on the ground of their mutual love. It was on this and this alone that she based her claim to overstep the barrier of class and to disregard the special obligations of her family to Geoffrey's. If then the love failed, her claim also failed. She promised Mrs. Meade, with a proud confidence in herself and him, that if

on his return he had ceased to love her and want her for his wife she would hold him perfectly free. He too promised his mother to be entirely frank on the subject, and indifferent to false codes of honor; but Mrs. Meade had a suspicion that in a young man's mouth such promises were not very reliable.

Bessie had indulged hopes of being sent somewhere for education while Geoffrey was abroad. Mrs. Meade had thoughts of doing this, but the Squire peremptorily refused. He staked everything on the chance of Geoffrey's infatuation wearing itself out. If he lost—well, it was not Tom Vyne's girl having had a little schooling more or less that would soften the blow. Geoffrey had never imagined the possibility of the Squire being self-restrained and despondent. His father's evident misery depressed him also, and as they tramped gloomily side by side over the stubble and through the turnips the keeper observed there was something wrong between them. "Money," he opined.

XIV.

When Elisabeth heard that Bessie had accepted these conditions, she was so glad that for a moment it seemed as though their hearts were again united. But the illusion was short. Elisabeth's cautious words and honest silences soon allowed the girl who knew her so well to see that she did not believe in Geoffrey's remaining true for a whole year, and even thought that Bessie's own feelings would have undergone a change of some sort before that time. It was agony to Bessie to breathe this atmosphere of silent scepticism. For a few days after she had bidden farewell to her lover, who came towards the end of October, on the pretext of fetching away his books, she was in a glow of exultation which protected her against the chill of this unbelief. Then again it tortured her, filling her mind with bitterness against her mother, whom she had not yet forgiven for betraying the secret of her engagement to Geoffrey's parents. She prayed with tears to be delivered from this terrible feeling of resentment; but still it was there. At any rate, she could not spend her year of probation at home in a daily round of work that had lost all interest for her. As the Meades would do nothing to educate her, she resolved to go into service in London, where she could observe the manners of ladies and model her own upon them.

Elisabeth did not oppose this plan. From the first she had foreseen that, however else this unfortunate business might end, it would end in her losing Bessie. Girls who had had a love-affair always wanted a change; and her other children had all told her that Milton was but a dull place for young people. She did not guess the bitterness of Bessie's resentment against herself; yet she knew there was a change, a cruel change, between them. The good, happy times were over, just as the bad ones before them had been over. Summer and winter, seed-time and harvest,—and most like a bad harvest at that,—such was the order of the world, and where was the use of complaining? Elisabeth Vyne set her lips close, and did her work well.

XV.

It happened that Mrs. Dangerfield was able to send Bessie at once to a situation which was apparently a good one. Her mistress was a daughter of Lord Riversham's, married to a rich button-maker. The plain country cousins of his lordship knew no more than Elisabeth herself of the modern developments of old families. Lady Maud Bryant was a typical member of that noisily foolish little set which the solemnly foolish take at their own valuation and call Society. Her house was a kind of Bedlam, where men and women bolstered and kissed each other about the passages and bedrooms, ruined each other at cards, and—the feminine portion of them—appeared in tights in the drawing-room on the smallest theatrical provocation. The servants were scarcely more respectable than their employers. Bessie found herself so strange in this household, and so scandalized by all she saw and heard, that only the strongest reasons would have kept her there. But she knew that Mrs. Dangerfield would be angry with her if she left, and that she would probably have difficulty in finding another place. Anything was better than home. Gradually she became more accustomed to her surroundings. The men-servants did not admire her sufficiently to brave her rebuffs, the housekeeper praised her, and most of the other women-servants were good-natured, if not immaculate. Sometimes gentlemen who came to the house paid her attentions; but she dismissed them as haughtily as she dismissed their valets. There was one exception. She was children's maid, and often used to sit in the former nursery of an afternoon, with her sewing. A cousin of Lady Maud's used sometimes to come there on the pretext of seeking the youngest girl, who was only eight. This young man—his name was Causton—enjoyed in the most literal sense of the word a bad reputation, but he was very superior in culture to the other frequenters of the house. He appreciated the possibilities of Bessie's beauty; her simplicity and ignorant intelligence interested him. He used to say that his talks with her, in the intervals of his ordinary society, refreshed him like eating a luscious fruit after a course of biscuits and anchovies. Bessie too could not help enjoying them. They seemed really to assist her in her endeavor to educate herself, as nothing else in that house could do.

But more and more every day her thoughts centred on Geoffrey and on his return.

Meantime Elisabeth was working harder than ever, in consequence of her daughter's absence. She had little leisure for brooding, yet at the back of her mind was the constant sense of loneliness, and of something painful to come. She was completely sceptical as to Geoffrey's wanting to marry Bessie after being away for a whole year and having seen something of the world. It troubled her to think of her girl's disappointment and probable anger against herself. Yet as she sat by the fire of an evening she looked beyond that, and saw Bessie settling down comfortably in Church Milton as Mrs. Hicks. Elisabeth's temperament and misfortunes alike led her to believe that any right-minded woman must be happy if her husband was only suffi-

ciently kind and respectable. The young man with the red moustache never came on his rounds without stopping to chat with her, and both of them willingly brought the conversation round to the absent one. There are men in whom constancy appears so inevitable that it almost ceases to be a virtue. At any rate, it ceases to be a compliment to its object, since it is evident that their affections would cling fondly round a pea-stick, if once they happened to get onto it. Such a man was Percy Hicks. In July, when Bessie's employers went abroad and she came home for a short holiday, he found innumerable pretexts for calling. She said she couldn't bear the sight of him. Nevertheless he continued to pursue her, with the irritating gaze of dog-like devotion. Bessie gathered from the manner of the two, rather than from any obvious support lent him by Elisabeth, that he was her mother's candidate for her hand in case the other one failed. And the gulf between mother and daughter widened.

XVI.

"So I says, Mary Anne, I shall ever love you,
Though you be ser cruel ter me,"

old Uncle Lambert quavered to himself in the slow sing-song which does duty with the Midland Englishman for every description of tune, as he collected the last wisps of hay with his two-pronged fork. The July evening was threatening, and all hands had been at work in the broad meadow between the Manor and Weeping Ferry, piling the deep hay in cocks against the coming rain. Bessie in her white sun-bonnet and apron had been helping the old man to build the last hay-cock between two willows at the river's edge. She stood now watching the brown water gliding under the willow branches, and, as she stood there, passed her finger with a concerned air along one satiny black eyebrow.

"I do believe I've got a wart coming!" she exclaimed.

"You go to old Catharine, missie. I warr'nt she can charm wartes away."

Uncle Lambert spoke in the vowelled drawl of the peasant, which the school-master's clipping cockney has displaced in younger mouths.

"Oh, it's all nonsense about charms, Uncle Lambert."

The old man sucked his under lip, and placed his little collection of hay carefully on the top of the cock, accompanying the action with several offended nods.

"Sixty-odd years, man and boy, I've a-worked on the land, and can do as good a day's work as any man in the parish. That's not as you may say a young man, nor yet over strong in the legs," he said, contemplating his handiwork. "But accordin' to the young uns it ain't no manner of use to pay attention to what old Uncle Lambert says."

"Well, I suppose people did put more faith in charms and things when you were a boy, Uncle Lambert," said Bessie, apologetically;

"and I do believe myself there's sometimes a queer thing happens, such as nobody can explain, let them be ever so scientific."

"If yer mean book-larnin', I'm agen it myself; spiles the youngsters for their work and sets 'em above their elders in their own conceit. But mark my words, missie,"—Uncle Lambert was passing his fork round the bottom of the haycock to make it tidy,—"you go to old Catharine when the moon's up, to-morrow night as you may say, and let she charm your wart, so as it will fall away from 'ee when the moon wanes. You'll find there's others as seek her, for all they deny it; for them's a false deceivin' lot, so they are. But I won't go for to arguey as the wise women nowadays are what they was formerly, as you may say. There was one as lived away down at Long Marston when I was a youngster,—she lived in the cottage by the gate, as was pulled down twenty or thirty years ago,—she wer a wise one and no mistake. She cured I of love, that she did."

"Cured you of love? Oh, Uncle Lambert, how could she do that?"

"That's more nor you or I'll ever guess, missie, but she did, I tell 'ee; and I was more beholden to her than I ever was to any one in my life."

Bessie sighed and smiled.

"Perhaps it 'ud be a good thing if every one could be cured of love."

Uncle Lambert meditated, scrubbing his chin; then, unwilling perhaps, like other people, to see his own advantages too generally shared,—

"Nay, nay, I wouldn't go so far as that, neither. It takes wise men and fools, as they say, to make the world."

"Did the charm work quite sudden?" asked Bessie, smiling again.

"Well, it was a matter of twelve hour or more a-doin'."

"Oh, Uncle Lambert, you can't have been really in love."

"I tell 'ee I was, proper," returned old Lambert, with indignation.

"And as good a right to be as any man as ever you know. Why, her and me—Jimmy Trotter, her whose father was shepherd down 'long o' old farmer Timbs,—we'd a-sat on the same bench at school, we 'ad, and been a-coortin' reg'lar since we was no 'igher nor this 'ere fark. Times and times we've a-danced John and Mary together at the Feast for a matter of three hour without settin' down. If that ain't bein' in love—but like enough you never see John and Mary danced in your life, missie."

"No, Uncle Lambert, I never so much as heard of it."

"Dear, deary me! To think o' that, now! Well, it wer a rare dance for coortin'. You just stood up with your young 'ooman, and a score or so of other young chaps in a row behind 'ee as it might be, one behind t'other, each of 'em with his young 'ooman,—and there you'd be, a-liftn' up first one leg and then t'other, and a-settin' of un down to the music, this way,—only my legs is a bit stiff,—and your sweetheart as you was a-coortin' doin' it for all the world the same. There weren't no need to seek for summat to say, but you could just kip on a-lookin' at she out of the tail of your eye, and she likewise,

knowin' well enough what you was after; and the music a-doin' the rest. Then round you went, she to the left and you to the right, and come up ag'in the same, only a-changin' of your place; and then begin a-liftin' of your feet to the tune ag'in, and a-squintin' at her, same as before. And we'd go on a-dancin' at that the best part of a day off and on, and never wish for nothin' different, unless it was gingerbread nuts, and maybe a peep-show. But nowadays, what with the wild beasties a-roarin' and frightenin' the girls into fits, and the guns a-bangin', and the steam-engine screechin', it don't seem to me as there's much coortin' goes on at Feast. Why, Lor' bless me, when you see the young chaps a-heavin' and tearin' round on them new-fangled merry-go-rounds, a-clingin' about the necks o' the 'orses, a-settin' up and lookin' straight afore 'em as white as windin'-sheet, you see well enough they ain't got much leisure for squintin' round at their sweethearts, bein' pretty well took up with wonderin' when the blessed steam-engine be goin' to blow off and let 'em down quiet-like."

"I think people who want to always find a time for courting, steam-engines or no, Uncle Lambert."

"You say so, do you, missie?" Uncle Lambert smiled knowingly. "Now I'll be bound there's been some young chap a-teachin' you that."

Bessie blushed.

"You've never told me how it was the wise woman cured you of being in love," she said, changing the subject.

"Well, I did feel a bit ashamed of goin' to her, that I did. But yer see there wer a young feller come over from Farringdon way, and got workin' at the forge opposite the 'Seven Stars,' under Job Quatermain, him whose son went off to the Crimea and got killed there, yer recollect,—a fine likely lad, though he wer but a babby then. And Jimimy she took up wi' this 'ere furriner, and the first thing as iver I heard of it was their bein' axed in church."

"Well, I never! She did treat you bad."

"So when we come out, I waited for 'er at the corner by the gate under the elm yonder; it wer nice warm growin' weather, I recollect, and the roots a-comin' on well; and I says to her, 'Oh, Jimimy Trotter, Jimimy Trotter! what ever 'ave you been a-doin'? Why the sakes do you go marryin' this 'ere furrin chap?' And she tosses her 'ead,—she did use to wear a strar bonnet, with white ribbins, prettier nor you sees 'em nowadays,—and says, sarcy-like, 'Because he axed me, Joshua Lambert, which is more nor ever you did.' Axed her! Did you ever 'ear the like? Why, who ever'd ha' thart o' doin' sich a thing? 'Because you never axed me,' says she! So they was married o' Easter Sunday, and I kip on mopin' and frettin' to think how false Jimimy Trotter 'ad a-been to I, so as I could 'ardly take my vittles for it. And it was the year of the queen's coronation, by which you may guess it wer a matter of fifty-odd year back, and Squire Tanfield and the vicar—'twas afore they fell out, yer see—let it be known as they wer goin' to give a dinner on the green to the 'ole parish, with roast beef and mutton and suet puddens and fruit tarts and plenty of good ale. And yer see it wer an uncommon fine thing for poor folks in them

days to get a good dinner, for they mostly got naught but bacon and beans, and glad enough if they could get 'em, and tea and all that dear. So I says to myself d'rectly I heard tell of this 'ere dinner, 'Now, Joshua Lambert, you must leave off frettin' after Jimimy Trotter, or you won't enj'y them good vittles, which mebbe you'll never git the likes of ag'in, seein' her gracious majesty's no older nor Jimimy; and I'd manage to feel a bit more cheerful-like for a day or two, and then ag'in I'd see Jimimy a-walkin' down street, and summat 'ud begin a-gnawin' at my 'eart that bad and no stoppin' of it. Then I 'eared as she and 'er husband, what I couldn't a-bear the sight of, was to be set at the same table along of we, and I knowed as every time I lifted my eyes from my meat I should see she a-settin' there along of he; and let the vittles be as good as they might they'd fair choke me. So the day before the dinner I says to myself, 'Darn this 'ere love-sickness,' says I. 'I'm blessed if I don't go to the wise woman at Long Marston.' And so I did, missie, so I did."

"But what did the wise woman do to you?" asked Bessie.

Uncle Lambert pushed back his hat, and scratched his head, where the grizzled hair was only just beginning to get thin.

"Well, I don't rightly remember," he said. "She gev me a charm agen love, and some physie,—a sort o' herb tea it tasted to me—I dunno. Anyway, next day there I was a-settin' at the same table along of Jimimy Trotter and 'er husband, a-eatin' my vittles hearty and jokin' away with 'er and 'im as though I'd never 'ad no love-thoughts in all my barn days, let alone for seven year. And I dunno as I ever felt that way ag'in about any young female: so you see it wer a right good charm."

"But you've been married, haven't you, Uncle Lambert?" asked Bessie.

"In course, missie; to my thinkin' it ain't respectable for a man to go on livin' single; and they do cheat yer so in lodgin's, generally speakin'. Oh, yes, I've been married, and my old missus weren't a bad sort, neither." There was a pause.

"I'd like to see Jimimy Trotter ag'in," he said. "She did use to look pretty and neat o' Sundays. It must be nigh on fifty year since she left the pläace."

Somebody was shouting for Uncle Lambert, across the breadth of the meadow. In the twilight, gathering swiftly under a lowering cloud, could still be seen Elisabeth's white apron and jug, and, more dimly, the figures of the haymakers gathered round her. Old Lambert shouted back, and hastened stiffly, fork in hand, over the shorn grass, to share whatever might be forthcoming.

Bessie stood awhile leaning on her rake and watching the river still gliding on, at the same even pace, like a thing with a secret life of its own apart from the villages and fields through which it passed forever; a secret goal of its own, of which it whispered in lonely places to the hanging willows and the gray beds of flowering rush. From the wide meadow opposite the cattle had gathered in to the shelter of some distant tree, black clouds hanging ragged and low overhead, and the distant country was already dim with rain. As the haymakers, thrusting them-

selves into their short coats, moved slowly away in the direction of the high-road, Bessie too began to move homeward.

As she came down the garden steps, the first big drops fell. The kitchen was so dark that for a minute she perceived nothing, except a white letter lying open on the table; then, more dimly, her mother in the chimney-corner, stooping over the fire. The letter was on foreign paper, and she guessed at once it must concern her. She untied her sun-bonnet slowly and hung it on a nail, while Elisabeth went on sweeping up the hearth.

"Dear, dear! what a storm we are going to have, to be sure!" exclaimed Elisabeth, glancing out of the window.

"Who's the letter from, mother?" asked Bessie, still with her face to the wall, arranging her sun-bonnet on the nail.

"From Mrs. Meade," answered Elisabeth. "She's enclosed a letter from furrin parts."

Bessie turned round quickly, and her eyes brightened.

"From Geoffrey?"

"No," returned Elisabeth, slowly. "From the gentleman who's travelling with him. Mr. Geoffrey's not well."

Bessie caught her breath.

"Is he very ill?"

"No, no, my dear. Only a kind of feverish attack, brought on by worry as much as anything else, the gentleman says. Mrs. Meade bids me give you his letter to read." Elisabeth sighed. "I doubt you won't thank her or me for it, though."

Elisabeth handed the letters to her daughter, who sat down on the window-sill to read them. It was very dark, and Elisabeth could not see her expression,—only the fine silhouette of her black head and regular yet rounded profile. The rain rattled on the roof like hail, and streamed to the ground till the sunk path round the house ran like a river. It fell in torrents on the pavement of the upper path, rising again from the shock of its own fall and confusing itself in vapor. Through the rushing of the rain Elisabeth heard now and again the crackle of the foreign paper as Bessie's trembling fingers turned it, but nothing else.

At length Bessie folded the letter deliberately, put it back in its envelope, and laid it on the table. "I don't believe a word of it," she said. "They sent this man with Geoffrey to turn him against me, and of course he says he's done it."

"My dear," returned Elisabeth, "don't you forget your promise. You're most partic'lar bound to be 'ave honorable, same as a lady would."

Bessie laughed bitterly. "Mother, you make me laugh, with your talk about ladies. You're the best lady ever I saw. Catch her ladyship letting off a duke's son and heir, if her daughter had once hooked him! Why should I do what they wouldn't do? You all of you took Geoffrey away from me before we'd been engaged long enough, or there wouldn't be any of this talk. But even if it's true now, when he comes back and sees how I love him and how I've got on, he'll soon remember, he'll soon be the same again—unless—unless—this miss—this young lady that's with them——"

She got up, clinched her hands, walked to the chimney-piece, and, leaning her forehead on it, stared at the fire. Then again she broke into a bitter laugh.

"Oh, what fools they are! what fools they are! They'd be glad enough for him to marry a lady like Miss Bryant. You remember the circus, mother, and how we didn't know where to look, because the girls came on dressed so immodest? Well, I've seen Miss Bryant and other young ladies come on, and act in the drawing-room, dressed just the same. The Meades know no more than you do about things, or they'd be pleased to have their son safe married to a respectable girl who'd love him true, and never speak lightly of him before company, nor flirt with other men—no, nor so much as want to see another man, if——" She broke off, her bosom heaving with sobs. "But you're all against me!" she cried.

Elisabeth also began to shed tears.

"Don't say I'm agen you, Bessie. You're my own flesh and blood, and there's no one I put before 'ee. It's come to that, that I shall be main glad to hear it if Mr. Geoffrey holds true to 'ee. And mind you, my dear, mother'll never come in your way, to make you ashamed in your high station; nor shall father, either, if so be I can prevent it. But, oh, my dear! if you wants to be 'appy, you must act honorable and fair. You must keep your word."

Bessie was silent a minute. Then she said, gravely,—

"Yes, mother, I promise you I'll do that; not because I fancy it's what a lady would do, but because you've always brought me up to behave honest and true, and not to make a promise as I didn't mean to keep."

"That's my own little Bessie," replied Elisabeth, wiping away her furtive tears with the corner of her apron. "I knowed you was a good girl at bottom."

Bessie smiled faintly.

"If I've got any goodness about me, mother, it's only what you've taught me." She stepped out on the porch.

"It's clearing over yonder," she said; "and how sweet the rain do smell, to be sure!"

XVII.

The next day the sun burned down fiercely on the Long Meadow, and the hay was partly carried. By noon the earth seemed already to have forgotten the heavy rain of the preceding day; but at night the mist floated dense and white over the fields on the opposite bank of the river, which lay lower than those on the Manor side. It shimmered like water under the moon. Far away across the river a corn-crake creaked persistently; nearer a pair of great pale-colored owls hovered and wheeled, incessantly uttering their thin, melancholy cry. Bessie was walking in the Long Meadow. She used not to walk out after dark when she lived at home, partly because she was busy, and partly because she was afraid of the Weeping Lady. Now the restlessness of mental

pain drove her away from the peaceful circle of the lamp, beneath which her mother sat sewing, and made her temporarily forget her terror of the supernatural. She went on, drawn by a vague desire to reach the punt, where she and Geoffrey had stood together on a night that seemed now such a long way off. She crossed by the lock-gates, and then stood still. Old Catharine was outside her house. She was kneeling on the ground, bareheaded, in the bright moonlight: a woman stood behind her, and a child crouched at her side. Both Catharine and the child were stooping over something on the ground which glittered. The old woman muttered confusedly for a minute, then straightened herself and held the child's hand up to the moon, crying out something more distinctly: then she rose, pulling herself up by the shoulder of the child, who shrunk away towards his mother. Catharine stooped till her face was on a level with his, laid her finger on her lips, and shook her head violently. The boy stared in alarm.

"Do 'ee know what she's a-telling of 'ee, Jimmy?" asked his mother. "She's bidding 'ee say nothing about it, for if 'ee do the charm won't do no manner of good."

The woman took something out of a purse and gave it to old Catharine, wished her good-night, and, taking her child by the hand, walked away beside the canal. She did not notice Bessie standing in her black dress under the willows. Catherine looked at the money in her open palm, turned it over, and, picking up the metal dish which she had used while charming the boy, went into the house.

Bessie waited a few minutes, till the woman and the child were out of sight and hearing, then went slowly towards the house. The quarrel between Catharine and herself had been not so much made up as forgotten,—especially by Bessie, to whom so much had happened since. She felt rather ashamed of going to old Catharine for a charm; yet why not? From what she had heard in London, she fancied all ladies believed in palmistry, and if there was something in that, why should there not be something in charms? Many people in Old Milton could charm away warts, but Catharine's charm was regarded as particularly efficacious, because it was more ceremonious than that in common use. Besides, she was notoriously a witch.

Bessie glanced in at the window of the Round House, as she passed, and saw old Catharine looking at her money by the light of the lamp, and a box open on the table beside her. It was useless to knock, and, pushing the door open, Bessie went in. She stood a minute watching Catharine rummage in her tin box, then came and touched her on the shoulder. The old woman looked up with a violent start, and began chattering angrily. She kept the money for her burying in the box, among other things, and it flustered her to find that some one else was there.

"Good-evening, Catharine," said Bessie. "I see you've been charming Jimmy Quatermain's warts. I've got one wants charming too."

She put her face into the light, pointing to the almost invisible lump upon her eyebrow. Catharine nodded, and took out of the box the round metal dish which she had just deposited in it. She looked

out grudgingly. The night was warm, but her old blood was chill, and the river mist was in her bones. Now, however, the moon shone almost straight in at the door, and, opening it wide, she sat down there on a chair with the dish between her knees, so placed that it focussed the moon's rays. She motioned to Bessie to come near, and pulled her down till the moon shone on her face.

"Wash—wash," she croaked, pointing to the dish.

Bessie put her hands into the dish with Catharine's, and the clammy little hands touched her own warm ones. Her eyes were dazzled by the brightness of the moon on the metal dish, and she could not see Catharine's face, across which slanted the dark shadow of the door-post. The old woman's rhythmic charm was slower and more confused than when she had repeated it over the child. Not a word was audible, even when she ended up loudly, drawing her cold finger along Bessie's eyebrow. Bessie felt she hardly knew how,—the superstition in her blood asserting itself, or stirred by some kind of physical influence emanating from Catharine.

Catharine pointed to the moon. "'Twill go when she goes," she said.

She got up and went to the table, then turned to stare in surprise at Bessie, who was still kneeling in the moonlight, with lifted face.

"Come, get up," she said, distinctly. "'Tis all done."

Bessie sighed, pushed the black hair up from her forehead, and rose. Catharine began to rummage in the box again, wondering whether Bessie was going to give her any money. In a minute Bessie came over to her, looking pale and strange, and asked, almost silently, with moving lips,—

"Have you got a charm against love?"

She looked eagerly in Catharine's wrinkled face, but there was no answering look of intelligence.

The old woman wrinkled her brows and shook her head. Bessie had a silver pencil-case on her chain, which Geoffrey had given her. She took an envelope out of her pocket and printed upon it, for Catharine could not read handwriting,—

"Have you got a charm to cure love?"

Catharine pored over the envelope, puzzled for some minutes, then—

"No," she said, shaking her head.

Bessie turned aside and felt in her pocket for her purse. Suddenly Catharine broke into her harsh, almost terrifying laugh. She felt in a corner of the tin box, and brought out a little glass-stoppered bottle full of powder.

"What's that?" she asked, holding it up, and underlining with a sharp yellow nail the writing on it, which she could not read.

Bessie took the bottle and held it to the lamp. There was a label on it, a little brown with age, and on the label was written, in an educated hand, "*A Cure for Love.*"

It seemed such a coincidence as to be almost a miracle that this thing should have come to her.

"What is it?" she asked.

Catharine shook her head.

"Have you tried it?" Bessie repeated till Catharine understood her. The old woman shook her head yet more vehemently, and laughed again her sudden weird laugh.

"Not I," she said, beginning distinctly, but growing indistinct as she continued. "A crazy sort of chap gave it to me ever so long ago. A 'pothecary he was. Awful crazy, to be sure. He pisoned himself afterwards, 'long with another woman, poor silly."

"Will you give it me?" asked Bessie. "I'll give you this for it," holding up half a crown.

"No," cried Catharine, stretching her hand to take the bottle again. "Don't you try. It's pison, maybe."

"I don't care," returned Bessie. "Let me have it."

Catharine looked at her and smiled slowly.

"Ay, ay," she said, "I've felt that way myself when I was young. But life's sweet, life's sweet."

She jerked the bottle out of Bessie's hand and replaced it in the box. Then she shook her head, and, putting her fingers to her throat, indicated by gesture her objection to being hung.

Bessie slipped the half-crown back into her purse, and took out a bright new five-shilling piece. She held it up to the lamp and spread out her five fingers.

"Look, Catharine. Five shillings. I'll give you that for it."

Catharine's eyes glittered. Five shillings! It was half as much as she had saved in fifteen years, and would make a real difference to the respectability of her funeral. Yet she hesitated, fearing for herself, and also having some remnants of humanity still left in her withered breast. But, after all, the contents of the bottle might be harmless, and yet more probably it was only a fancy for which the foolish young creature was willing to pay all that. She remembered herself when a novice in the trade of shame having several times talked and thought of drowning herself; but really doing it was another matter.

She put out her hand for the coin, turned it over, and felt its weight. She had never even seen a crown piece before, still less handled one. She looked up at Bessie under her brows.

"You won't tell who gave it you?" she asked. "It might bring me in a peck of trouble."

"I'll promise not to tell," replied Bessie.

There was a brown, musty-smelling Bible lying on the window-sill. Miss Dangerfield occasionally read it to Catharine, and she herself sometimes spelt in it of an evening, having nothing to do, and being afraid of death and the devil.

"Kiss that and promise," said Catharine, holding it up to Bessie's lips.

Bessie did so. Catharine handed her the bottle, and she went out into the night. Everything was the same as it had been when she had come across the Long Meadow to the Ferry, except that the moon rode higher in the sky, and the mist too had risen higher over the meadows. Yet the night seemed to have become full of terrors, and she was afraid to be alone in it. She dared not look round at the Ferry, for fear she should see something there, but ran through the shadow of

the willows, over the lock-gates, and along the haunted meadow-path, with beating heart, sometimes fancying her own footsteps to be those of some one in pursuit.

XVIII.

In the autumn the Bryants took a shooting-box in Scotland, which was not large enough to hold all their household, and Bessie might have gone to her own home. But she preferred to stay almost alone in the half-darkened London house. She marked off the days on an almanac to a certain day in October when she expected to receive a letter. Punctually the letter came, and at first it was like cold water dashed in her face. Yet, reading it over and over again, she came to think it was not really as cold as she had supposed. In a week or more he would be in England, she would see him, and then—then everything would be as before.

Pacing the sheeted house alone, she held over and over again the same talk with herself, reasoning with her own weak yet obstinate doubts, and always reaching the same brave conclusion; when once they had met again, all would be well.

The hours passed very slowly in the empty house; empty because the few servants left in it were out most of the day, and often most of the night. One person often came to see her, a good-natured woman who had till recently been maid to her ladyship. She was always asking Bessie to go out with her to places of amusement, but Bessie had never been. At last a day came when she thought she might expect Geoffrey. She listened and looked out all the morning and afternoon, till the anxiety of her desire to see him became too great to bear. When evening fell and she had no longer any hopes of his coming, the ex-maid came to see her, and, as usual, asked her to go out. For the first time, she went. After having tea with her friend, she accompanied her to a music hall. There, either by chance or otherwise, they met Mr. Causton. He sat by Bessie, and made her take his arm when the performance was over. It had been pouring with rain all day, and the crowd moved towards the entrance, a slow solid entity, as though reluctant to leave the shelter of the hall. In the vestibule there was a loosening and shifting of the mass, and Bessie and her companions found themselves close against a young man in a long brown overcoat, who was settling his cap on his head and looking out at the sky.

"Hullo, Meade!" exclaimed Mr. Causton. "How are you? I thought you were abroad."

"So I was till this evening," returned Geoffrey, and made some banal inquiry, turning a face of cold dislike towards his interlocutor. In the hard glare of the electric light he looked ill, and years older than when he had parted from Bessie.

She clutched Mr. Causton's arm with both hands, and barely restrained a cry of "Geoffrey!" She did not know whether he saw her or not. At any rate, he said not a word, but turned his back and went away.

Bessie did not know how she escaped from the others. She had only an impression of walking fast, running,—flying, for all she knew,—through a wilderness of lights in pursuit of the figure in the long brown overcoat. The streets were like rivers, the open spaces like lakes. Everywhere, overhead and under-foot, were lights; long rows of yellow gas-lamps, clusters of white electric lamps, broken, wavering reflections, through which splashed continuous busy wheels. The countless lights of the vehicles, moving backward and forward, crossing and re-crossing, rushing, crawling, pausing, now all together, now singly, seemed to be weaving some kind of complicated unending dance through the immense mysterious city, dark behind all its lights. Bessie, who had been used to wait for a policeman at the simplest crossing, went on blindly now through a maze of wheels; and everywhere as she went a blurred reflection moved with her, deep down in the slimy pavement or in the long puddle of the street. At length she came up with the figure in the brown coat. She touched his elbow, but he took no notice. She took hold of his sleeve; he turned round to shake her off. Then he saw who she was.

"Bessie Vyne! Good heavens, Bessie! is it really you?"

"Geoffrey! Didn't you know me?"

"No; at least I couldn't believe it was—I didn't expect— But you mustn't be about the streets like this, Bessie. Let me put you into a cab, do; Grosvenor Square, isn't it? I've written there to say I'd come and see you on Monday. I'm only just in town for a night now, on my way home."

"Oh, I can't wait till Monday, Geoffrey! I must know whether you love me still. I can't bear not knowing any more."

"But we can't talk about it in the street, can we, Bessie? I asked you in my letter to trust me to behave——"

"But that's no use, you know it isn't!" she cried, in anguish, forgetting everything but his presence and her fate that hung upon his utterance. The quiver of rising tears was in her voice. "I mustn't marry you unless you really love me. I promised not to. But you do love me—oh, please say you do!"

She looked up in Geoffrey's face, and it seemed quite different from what she remembered it: not a boy's face, but a man's, looking anxious and haggard.

"Hush, hush, Bessie!" he reiterated, in a miserable voice. "We can't talk about it here."

She clung to his arm and fought down her rising sobs.

"Maybe you've forgotten a bit, dear," she pleaded, "but you'll soon remember, you'll soon come to love me again as much as ever; I'm sure you will. You'll see I've improved myself ever so much. I have so tried to be more like a lady, Geoff."

"I—I—oh, Bessie, I——" And Geoffrey stuck there, not having the brutal frankness to say, "I liked you better as you were."

Bessie did not know what the end of the sentence should have been, but she felt it was not anything satisfactory. She walked on in silence for a minute, with the tears running down her cheeks, then broke out again:

"I've thought of nothing but you, Geoffrey, all this while. I don't believe there's been a minute all the time you've been away I've not thought of you. I love you more than I did when you went. I can't tell you, I never could tell you; and I don't expect you to love me the same; but, oh, you must love me a little, you must say you do, Geoffrey, or I shall die."

She pressed her face against his sleeve and burst into a passion of tears. The pavement was crowded, the passers-by were mostly hurrying along under umbrellas, yet many of them turned to stare at the couple. Geoffrey bent over her, conscious of the eyes upon them, wretched, shaken by horrible irresolution. He was on the edge of a weakness which he knew to be fateful. At that moment Bessie checked her sobs and started half away from him. A passer-by had touched her on the shoulder. Through the mist of her tears she saw a figure rapidly disappearing amid jostling umbrellas just ahead,—the thick-set figure of a countrywoman in a black mushroom hat and a gray shawl. She dropped Geoffrey's arm, and hastened after it a few steps, then rubbed the tears from her eyes and looked again. But the figure was gone, lost in the crowd. She took out her pocket-handkerchief, wiped her eyes and cheeks dry, set straight her large hat, which had fallen half off her head, and came back to Geoffrey.

"Is mother in London?" she asked, in a quiet voice.

"Not that I know of," he returned, puzzled, yet relieved, by the alteration in her manner.

There was a pause.

"You'd better call a cab," she said.

He did so. She got in, and he took her hand. It lay limp in his for a moment, then returned his grasp convulsively.

"You'll come to-morrow? You won't wait till Monday?"

"Yes, yes, Bessie, I'll be sure to come."

The four-wheeler jolted away with its little load of human care and passion, and melted into the indistinguishable throng of moving vehicles.

XIX.

The next morning he came. A footman in *deshabillé* let him into the hall, where he sat on a polished chair till a baize door swung somewhere and Bessie appeared. She hardly lifted her eyes to his face till they stood in the large dismantled drawing-room, the very walls of which were hung with sheets. When she did look at him, she saw more clearly than before that change in his face which she had already perceived; and the perception of it gave her a premonitory chill at the heart. The year which Geoffrey had passed in travel, and also the difficult position in which he had found himself towards Bessie, his parents, and latterly towards another, had suddenly matured him. The easy, pleasant, narrow life, free from all responsibility in the present or care for the future, which he had led at school and college, had left his character undeveloped, but he always had the rudiments

of firmness and of strong common sense. He was ashamed of his inconstancy to Bessie, but he neither excused nor disguised it to himself. He knew that not only his own happiness, but that of his parents, and perhaps of one still dearer to him, were in the balance against hers. If she held him to his engagement, he was prepared to fulfil it; but he was determined she should not do so under any misapprehension as to his feelings. His chance encounter with her last night had, in spite of his momentary hesitation, finally hardened him in his resolution. His idyllic Bessie of the Manor and the Bessie who went to a music hall in company with a man like Causton seemed to him two very different persons. He had not slept much that night, and Bessie had still less. The delirium of agonized passion in which she had pursued Geoffrey through the streets had left her suddenly at the touch of a strange hand. Love and anguish were still in her heart, but self-consciousness and self-respect had returned. In the watches of the night her whole body had seemed to burn with shame and humiliation at the recollection of her own behavior, and there was something hard in her demeanor as she stood waiting for Geoffrey to begin.

"You're looking ill, Bessie," he said, gently, unable immediately to plunge into the important subject.

"So do you, for that matter," she replied. "You've gone thin and lost your color."

There was a pause. Then she said, abruptly, "I only want you to tell me straight whether you still care for me the same way you did when you went away."

Geoffrey passed his fingers through his bright hair till it stood on end.

"I know I'm a beast," he said. "You mustn't think I won't marry you if you choose to take me, Bessie, but it's only fair to every one you should know——"

"You don't," she broke in, quickly. Involuntarily she put her hand to her heart, as though something had actually struck her there. Her face was as white as the sheet behind it.

Geoffrey was not looking at her. He dropped into a chair by a table, and, leaning his elbow on it, rumbled his hair again.

"I wish to heaven I could say I did, Bessie," he said. "Of course I've behaved like a brute, and—and a most confounded ass. I must be an uncommon poor sort of chap not to be able to stick to a girl better than that."

Bessie was silent, and he began again:

"If we two were the only people concerned in the business, I'd have married you to-morrow, upon my honor I would, without saying a word about it, and tried never to let you know how I felt."

"What other people are there concerned?" she asked.

"My father and mother," he replied; and the hesitation with which he ended would have been imperceptible to an ear but normally attentive.

"Is there any one else it matters to?" asked Bessie, and there was a gleam in her eye.

The hesitation was more marked this time. He answered in a low voice, his face hidden from her by his arm,—

"Yes—perhaps—I think so."

"The young lady you were abroad with, I suppose," she said, almost indifferently.

Geoffrey hesitated.

"I'd rather not answer that question. Of course I said nothing, and tried not to show what I felt, though I'm afraid I have. I'm awfully sorry and ashamed of myself, Bessie; I am, indeed. I'll do anything on earth you want me to do, but it's best to tell the truth: I do care for some one else."

There was a silence. Bessie was playing with a paper-knife, her head bent and storm gathering on her brow. She lifted it, and broke into a short laugh.

"A young lady, of course! I only wish you, and your father and mother too, knew as much as I do about young ladies, and you wouldn't all be so precious glad to get one, instead of a poor girl that's been brought up respectable."

The implied reflection on the lady of his heart flushed Geoffrey's pale remorse with anger. He could have said something about the music hall and Causton, but restrained himself, and answered, coldly,—

"No one could possibly say a word against this young lady."

Bessie smiled insolently.

"So you think. She knows what hits your fancy, I dare say. She might be quite different if she was here. I can tell you all the young ladies that come to this house go pillow-fighting with the gentlemen and kissing them on the staircases, as like one another as a brood of chickens they are, running chirruping about, with their long necks and little flat, fluffy, yellow heads,—only some of 'em are dark. But they've all got no more sense inside of 'em than a chicken's got. I wish you joy of your young lady."

There was just sufficient resemblance to a certain young lady in the description of the girls with long necks and flat, fluffy, yellow heads, to give an unpleasant point to Bessie's remarks, though otherwise they were inapplicable.

"I'm sorry you've got into a house of that sort, Bessie," he said, stiffly. "I suppose that's how you came to pick up a fellow like Causton and be at a music hall with him."

Bessie laughed again, the same hard laugh.

"Why, don't you even know that young ladies go to music halls, Geoffrey? What an innocent you are, to be sure?"

Then her whole manner changed. Her head fell on her breast, and her arms to her sides.

"Don't be hard on me, Geoff," she pleaded, huskily. "I didn't go with Mr. Causton. I never went before, though they've asked me times and times. But to go on waiting, waiting, all alone,—it was so dreadful. Oh, Geoffrey, dear, I couldn't bear it! I couldn't really. I had to do something."

She looked wistfully at him, with a faint passing hope that perhaps after all he didn't care about the young lady so very much, but was only jealous because he had met her with Mr. Causton. Geoffrey covered his face with his hand and almost groaned.

"If you feel as bad as all that about it, Bessie," he said, "I mustn't treat you this way. I'll marry you and do my best to make you a good husband. So there!"

He rose, very pale, but trying to look pleasant, and held out his hand to her.

Bessie's eyes lighted up; a wave of blood came into her cheeks, then ebbed. The moment of temptation was over.

"No," she said, deliberately, "I couldn't let you do that. I promised mother, and your mother too. It's not so bad, really, now I know. It was only the waiting I couldn't bear. Of course I can't pretend I don't love you, Geoffrey. I can't change my feelings sudden, same as you seem able to do. But I shall get over it, I suppose; people always seem to get over it. I wish you all happiness, Geoffrey, you and your bride."

"I haven't got a bride, Bessie," he stammered, miserably. "It's only—only—— But look here! I can't just go away and leave you like this. You must let the gov'nor or the mater see you or your mother, or something,—and do something—and do something for you, don't you know?"

"If you mean give me money," returned Bessie, "neither mother nor I would think of taking it. I don't believe you'd offer it to a lady you'd jilted, Geoffrey, and, though I'm not one, I'd rather you'd behave to me the same as if I were. I dare say I shan't stay much longer in this house, but I have good health and a good character, and I can look after myself, thank you."

"I know I've behaved badly to you, Bessie," he said, humbly. "But is there nothing you'll let me do for you? Nothing at all?"

He took her hand and held it fast.

"No," she said, firmly, almost sternly. "Nothing. Good-by, Geoffrey."

He said good-by, with hanging head, and went out. She stood where he had left her, in the middle of the room, and heard his footsteps go echoing down the stripped staircase, and heard the slam of the heavy front door. Then she fell upon her face on the bare floor, pressing it on the place where he had stood.

"Oh, Geoffrey," she whispered, "Geoffrey—Geoffrey darling—I can't—I can't——"

And the rest was lost in a storm of sobs.

XX.

The floods were out. The people living on the low distant hills saw from their windows, when the rare sun shone, instead of the flat green valley, a long flash of silver running towards the western horizon. In the valley, too, the sun sometimes burnished the surface of the flood till it shone like a shield, but oftener it lay dull and gray, a watery world seen through the dim blurring medium of a watery atmosphere. It was not yet the end of October, but the hedges,

already bare, cut it with gaunt lines of black. The turbid river rushed through the standing water, swirling round the trunks of sodden willows and fretting impatiently over beds of withered reeds. The Manor meadows, lying higher than those on the other bank of the river, were not yet flooded; but the water was still coming down.

Tryphena sat on the black rug, a rug made of an infinite number of scraps of cloth, before a bright fire. It was Tryphena, though her own mother might not have known her. She was wrapped in a large gray stuff dress, her hands invisible up the sleeves of it, her feet sticking out from under its folds, cased in startlingly disproportionate boots, —cloth boots with shiny toe-caps. Her hair hung straight and dripping, and her own clothes steamed on a horse before the fire.

"Oh, Mrs. Vyne, why are kitchens nicer than drawing-rooms?" she sighed contentedly.

Elisabeth, thinking this might be a riddle, would not commit herself to an answer.

"Dear, dear! how wet your frock do keep! 'tis a pity to spoil a good frock, so it is!"

"Nasty old thing! I wish I could have left my frock to drown without me inside it! But, Mrs. Vyne, won't you let me sleep here for the night? I shouldn't want a bed, you know; I should be quite comfortable lying here on the rug."

"Lor', Miss Tryphena! you'd be missing your nice bed fine before midnight, and your little white nighty-gown and all."

"No, I shouldn't miss anything,—except my hair-curlers."

And Tryphena took up a deplorably straight wisp of hair from her forehead, between finger and thumb, and, rolling her eyes up painfully, contemplated the wisp with concern.

"What a cure you are, to be sure!" said matter-of-fact Elisabeth, smiling indulgently.

It was better listening to Miss Tryphena's nonsense than sitting by the fire alone with the heartache.

Tryphena put her chin on her hands and stared at the fire.

"Yes, I should like to sleep here. Didn't it ever come upon you when you were young, Mrs. Vyne, how dreadful it was to look forward and think of all the days and days of your life?—how every night you'd got to take off your stockings and all your stupid clothes the same way, and put on your night-gown and get into bed; and how every morning you'd got to put on all the tiresome things over again, and remember all the buttons and hooks and everything? And then comes family prayers! I sometimes think I can't bear more of family prayers."

Elisabeth was silent, stooping over her ironing till the lamp shone full on the top of her head, where the brown hair was getting thin and showed some silver threads. Tryphena gave a deep sigh.

"Do tell me, Mrs. Vyne, are you never weary of life? I am."

Elisabeth looked up, a startled look in her blue eyes. She put the iron back on the overturned saucer, but kept her hand on it, looking at Tryphena. It was not the strangeness of Tryphena's saying this which struck her, so much as the strangeness of herself never having

thought it. Here was this child who did not know what it meant to suffer—for Elisabeth knew nothing of the temperament to which *ennui* is positive suffering—having this idea, while she, Elisabeth, through all her troubles had never had it. Unless things turned out well with Bessie, she had nothing left to live for; yet she had never thought of being weary of life.

"No; I can't say as ever I was," she replied, slowly, with a certain sense of humiliated stupidity. And it was a full minute before she lifted the iron again.

Thomas Vyne's lagging tread came round the little paved path,—that ponderous tread which more than anything else marks the difference between the man of trained alert nervous system and the rustic or the street loafer. He scraped his boots noisily and came in. Seeing Tryphena, he stared, and removed his greasy felt hat. She jumped up.

"How d'ye do, Mr. Vyne?" she cried. "Isn't it fun? Do look!" Thomas did not require this injunction. "I've got on all Mrs. Vyne's clothes."

"Why, what ever have you been a-doing to yourself, missie? You do look a figure of fun." And Thomas rubbed his bristly chin to hide a smile.

"Oh, it's been such a splendid joke, ripping good sport! I went out to tea at Long Marston. Samuel drove me there, and I told him I'd walk back, because I knew what I wanted to do. I tried coming in a bee-line from Marston Bridge to the Ferry. The floods are out as deep as anything. It was like a great flood in America, you know, when you are running away from it with all the wild animals, wolves and buffaloes and tigers and things, and you don't mind them a bit, you know. It was just like that. I got over lots of places by crawling along palings and climbing trees, and I paddled a lot too; then when I tried to paddle, a ditch came suddenly, and I went in right over my head: so you see if I hadn't insisted on mamma having me taught swimming at Brighton last year, I should have been drowned. Wasn't it a good thing?"

"Well, did you ever 'ear the like of that, mother?" asked Thomas, slowly scratching his head. "It's a mercy the child's alive, that it is."

"Then I tried to run home, but my wet clothes were so awfully heavy, and when I got to the lock-gates—do you know, Mrs. Vyne, the water's so high there it's beginning to run over? I wouldn't have minded that, if I hadn't been tired, but I thought I'd better come in here and ask Mrs. Vyne to dry my things."

"I've told Uncle Lambert to leave word at the rectory on his way home that Miss Tryphena's here," said Elisabeth, "and you'll walk back with her after supper, won't you, Tom?"

Thomas assented willingly, his mind's eye catching a cheerful glimpse of the lighted windows of the "Seven Stars."

The evening passed off gayly. Tryphena's invariable house-supper of dry biscuits with caraway-seeds in them was among the institutions that made her weary of life. Cold meat and beer, toasted cheese and

Elisabeth's excellent bread, seemed to her a feast for a queen, and she was the queen of the feast. Elisabeth laughed, and forgot for a little that gnawing anxiety of which she was conscious through all her work. She had heard from Mrs. Meade, but not a word from Bessie. Elisabeth and Thomas agreed that Miss Tryphena was as good as a play. But then, as Tryphena very gravely observed, they had neither of them ever seen a play, so they could not be sure of it. Directly after supper Thomas withdrew to the stable with reluctance, still grinning. The only horse kept on the farm had strained a sinew, and required a fomentation. He was so long away that Elisabeth began to fidget about the lateness of the hour. She slipped on her boots, and stepped across the yard in the damp darkness, which protected her from seeing the unclean puddles through which she waded, till the streak of yellow light from the stable door showed them brown and tremulous in the small rain. Thomas was doing nothing. He was crouched on some straw in the corner of an empty stall, with his lantern by his side. His face was hidden between his knees, and his hands clasped round them. But when Elisabeth stood in the doorway he started up white, with staring eyes.

"By Golly, Lizzie!" he stammered, in a minute, "I made sure you was—was summat."

"You must have been taking the extry glass, Thomas," observed Elisabeth.

"S'help me, I 'ain't touched a drop but what you see," he returned, indignantly. "But I feel precious queer, that I do—ser restless like." Elisabeth looked at him doubtfully.

"Damn you, Lizzie! don't look at me as though I warn't speakin' the truth," he cried, half irritable, half piteous. "My nerves is all of a twitter. But it ain't no use talkin' to you about 'em. 'Arriet don't often 'it the nail on the 'ead, but she just about do when she says as you've got no more nerves nor a bullock."

Elisabeth had heard this aspersion on her nervous system before, and paid no attention to it.

"It's about time you was taking Miss Tryphena home," she said, picking up her cotton skirt behind, to slabber through the puddles.

Thomas growled something inarticulate, and followed her with the lantern.

"I've been thinking whether you'd best try the road or the canal," she continued, as they walked. "The road's the longest, and might be the wettest too, if the brook have overflowed. But by what Miss Tryphena says, it do seem as though the man from Milton Lock had not been round to let the water off at the Ferry. 'Tis well enough to leave it most seasons, for the holes in the gates be big enough for all, but it do seem as though the water were a-coming along too fast, and maybe if the gates ain't set open old Catharine 'll be flooded out, and the water over the footpath, too,—which ain't convenient-like for Uncle Lambert or any on us. So I was thinking you'd best go on and open the gates a bit, and come back for missie."

Thomas spoke hoarsely. "Go to the lock—go to the lock, says you. I knowed yer'd say it. There's summat been a-tryin' to get me

to the — lock this ever ser long. But I wun't go; I wun't. Go yerself, 'Lisabeth."

"I don't know as I could manage the gates, and 'tis so uncommon wet for my petticoats. I do seem to ha' bin paddling like a duck 'most all day, and my rheumatics that bad."

They had reached the house. Thomas, muttering to himself, began tying up his trousers with string, and then threw a large stiff bit of tarpaulin over his shoulders, and went out without further remonstrance. Elisabeth was left thoughtful, almost uneasy, having expected to have to open the gates herself, after a prolonged discussion. She stood at the back door watching the lantern till she heard the click of the yard gate and saw the light disappear round the corner of the barn. Then she took off her boots in the passage and returned to the kitchen. Since Bessie had left there was more needlework for her to do, and she sat down to darn a sock. Tryphena had changed her clothes, and was in possession of the wooden elbow-chair, scorching her boots on the red logs in a spirit of mere luxury, her feet having long been perfectly warm. The mood of life-weariness and that of joy in eventful living were both over since supper. She was now disposed for a quiet gossip, of a mildly scandalous nature, such as was frequently indulged in at the rectory. So it was—

"Oh, Mrs. Vyne, did you notice Annie Trinder in church on Sunday? Did you ever see such a hat?" And, "Fancy! Kate Coxe has jilted our Samuel again. I think it's so horrid of her. She's done it three or four times, you know; and—isn't it tiresome of him?—he won't tell me the reason."

Just as Tryphena was observing, "Do you know there's been such a row on up at the Chapel," Elisabeth heard heavy feet hastening along the garden path and down the steps to the porch. She paused, with her needle in the air. Some one bumped against the door, the latch lifted, and Thomas flung himself into the room. He sat down on a chair by the dresser, and did not take his hat off, but pushed it back and wiped his brow with his coat-sleeve. He was livid and out of breath.

"Just you give me a drop o' brandy, missus," he said, peremptorily.

Elisabeth went to the cupboard and took out a bottle and glass.

"Are you took bad, Tom? Did anything go wrong with the gates?"

Thomas cursed the gates.

"You may—well, open 'em yourself."

He drank the brandy, drew his coat-sleeve across his mouth, and returned to a consciousness of Tryphena's presence. Coming forward, he sat down in Elisabeth's chair, by the lamp, and stretched across the table towards Tryphena, his elbow in a round basket full of socks. Some color had returned to his cheeks, his eyes glittered, and his lower lip trembled. "Look 'ee, missie," he said, impressively, spreading out his palm, "don't you go for to think I'm a coward. I'm as bold a man as ever you see if it's a matter o' standin' up to chaps, or tacklin' runaway 'orses and mad bulls and such-like. But when it comes to

ghostes, I tell 'ee fair, my nerves won't stand 'em. It ain't no use talkin' to 'er"—with a jerk of his thumb over his shoulder. "*She* won't believe me. 'Cos why? She can't see 'em nor 'ear 'em 'erself. But I can; and I'll take my Bible oath I see the Weepin' Lady t'other side the lock, screamin' and hollerin'—oh, Lor'!"

He passed his hand across his eyes, and drew his shoulders together in a momentary shudder.

This was interesting. Tryphena's eyes grew round.

"Is that the ghost? I knew there was one here, but they never would let me be told about it. Did you see it?"

"No, no," put in Elisabeth, hastily. "There ain't no ghostes here, my dear, nor anywhere else."

"Oh, no! in course not," returned Thomas, with concentrated scorn. "Last time I 'eard un she said it were an owl,—a bl—blessed owl."

"It's not the time of year for owls," said Elisabeth, thinking. "What was it you see, exactly, Tom?"

"Well, I'll tell 'ee as near as I can. It wer precious dark, and I didn't see nothin' till I got agen the lock. The waters come right up over the top of un, and I held up the lantern to have a look round, fear I should be drowned, goin' to open the gates. And I see 'er come glidin' up from the Ferry, darkish-like, and a-wavin' her arms, like this. And she hollered out—well, I know it pretty well curdled my blood for to 'ear 'er, it did. It weren't like nothin' yuman. I wer all of a tremble, and the sweat comin' out all over me, somethin' dreadful."

"What did you do?" asked Tryphena, breathless with excitement.

"Do, missie? Well, I don't 'ardly know. I got 'ome somehow or another, though my legs did seem like as if they'd refuse to carry me. Ay, it was the Weepin' Lady this time, and no mistake."

"It's a deal more likely it wer old Catharine in trouble," returned Elisabeth, dryly. In her inmost heart she was not quite so complete a sceptic with regard to ghosts as she pretended; but she believed much more firmly in a higher Power that would not allow them to harm the innocent. "You did ought to ha' opened the gates, Tom. She do stand a bit lower nor we, and most like she's afeared o' the water, poor old soul; or maybe she's ill. But 'tis poor work sendin' men of arrands, for they do always think they know better nor to do 'em. I'll go open them gates myself. I did ought to ha' done it at first."

She hastily stuck some pins into her mouth, and began kilting up her print skirt over her gray stuff petticoat.

"I tell 'ee it warn't old Catharine," said Thomas.

He drew his chair in front of the fire, and glanced uneasily towards the window, then rose and drew the short blue curtains across it, with a hasp of rings hurried along the iron rod.

"I ain't a-goin' out again to-night," he said, in an obstinate voice, sitting down and holding on to the seat of his chair. "Let folks go as don't believe there ain't no such thing as ghostes."

Elisabeth was buttoning her boots.

Tryphena spoke, pale, but determined. "I'm coming with you to see the gh—to see what's the matter, Mrs. Vyne."

Elisabeth thought a moment.

"Very well, missie. 'Tis getting late for you. I'll see you over lock and home as far as your gate."

She got up, painfully aware of her rheumatism, and fetched her hat and shawl, then went out, followed by Tryphena. A lantern and a large wet cotton umbrella stood in the porch. Elisabeth took the lantern and handed the umbrella to Tryphena. They went through the gate and on by the field path. At first the night seemed all black round the little circle of their light, which fell about their feet, showing the sodden path and the yellowing meadow-grass lifeless and heavy with rain. But presently Tryphena, peering about her, could discern the gray gleam of the floods and the dark masses of the shadowy trees. It had left off raining, but the air was full of moisture, and, though it was mostly still, every now and then it moved fitfully, as a person moves in sleep and lies quiet again, and as it swept the branches together their long sigh mingled with the ceaseless whisper of the rising river. Tryphena listened to these faint sounds, and through them she listened for another sound,—for some thrilling and unusual sound, which she was at once desirous and afraid of hearing.

Elisabeth walked on fast and in silence. She was out of patience with Thomas, her rheumatism pained her, and she knew that to-night in bed it would be like red-hot skewers in her bones. At length Tryphena, hastening close behind, clutched her shawl and brought her to a stand-still.

"I say, Mrs. Vyne, what's that?"

Elisabeth listened.

"'Tis only the water in the reed-bed, yonder. Their stems be stout yet, though they be dry and dead."

They went on, one behind the other, on the narrow path, Tryphena still holding on to the shawl.

"Why, miss," said Elisabeth, a little impatiently, "you're never afraid of ghostes! When I wer a little girl, mother did use to teach us a verse to say o' nights, to keep us from being frightened of sperrits. We did use to say,—

"Four carners to my bed,
Four angels round my head,
One to watch, two to pray,
And one to bear my soul away.
Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John,
Bless the bed that I lay on."

"But our rector, who was a very good man, and a college gentleman, too, he explained to we how it was all heathen papistry to believe in ghostes or charmes agen 'em. For, as he did use to tell us, we can't believe as the Lord Jesus allows the sperrits of the dead to wander about the earth, silly-like, frightening poor harmless folk, when we know well enough He's ordained a place for every soul of us, in heaven or in——"

She broke off. The Round House and the tall poplar above it

showed phantom-like before them. The water lay spread about it, black as a pit in the shadow, and beyond gleaming with a pale diffused light from some undivined source. As Elisabeth ceased speaking, Tryphena threw her arms round her companion's waist, clasping her convulsively with a low "There!" Elisabeth had heard it too; a wild, thin wail, a hardly human cry, that yet seemed to have some word hidden in it. It came to them out of impenetrable shadow, across the gleaming water. Elisabeth caught her breath, and hurried on as well as she could, with Tryphena clinging to her, both of them peering forward into the darkness. When they reached the lock, they found it was flooded, and paused at the edge of the water, but neither of them spoke. They could see a faint patch of light beyond the tree-shadows,—the light thrown from Catharine's window, which was at right angles to them, looking towards the causeway.

Again the cry came to them. They were nearer, but it was weaker, at once hoarse and shrill, like the shriek of a dreamer in a nightmare. Yet there was something in it that made Elisabeth start and utter a low exclamation. Tryphena hid her face on Elisabeth's shoulder and tightened her embrace. She also uttered an exclamation, but it was one merely of terrified excitement, without the touch of questioning and surprise that was in Elisabeth's. Elisabeth moved the lantern round, judging rapidly the depth of the flood and marking the edge of the canal. She disengaged herself from Tryphena almost roughly. "Run home," she said. "Run back, and tell father to come here directly."

"Back to the Manor, do you mean?" asked Tryphena, quaveringly; "all by myself? Oh, I really couldn't! Do come too, Mrs. Vyne."

"Now don't you be a wicked, foolish girl," said Elisabeth, sharply, as she stepped in the water. "There's no ghostes here, I tell 'ee. 'Tis some one in trouble."

"Shall I come back here?" asked Tryphena.

"No," replied Elisabeth, with a sternness such as the child had never seen in her before. "No," she repeated. "You run along."

The lantern which Elisabeth had set down on the grass showed her already across the breadth of the flood-water pushing with all her might at the great gray beam which seemed to open the lock-gate. At length the gate swung. There was a swirl in the lock; the piled-up mass of water plunged heavily into the wide pool below, shooting the eddying whiteness of its foam far out into the darkness, to whirl round and round a few bewildered moments, and then hurry away downstream, surging over the reeds and along the ranks of willows. Tryphena heard it as she trotted along the meadow with beating heart but set teeth, for she was a brave as well as a nervous child.

Elisabeth waited, leaning against the beam, for minutes that seemed hours, till the first heavy rush of water had subsided, and she was able by a great effort to push the gate to again. Then, taking up the lantern, she crossed the narrow wet planks. She paused a moment before putting the gate on the other side ajar, to let the water continue running off. "Who's there?" she cried, holding up the lantern and looking

round her. No one answered, and there was nothing to be seen but the willows and the sodden ground. She opened the lock-gate and hurried forward, stumbling over the stumps of old cabbages, till she came to the Round House. The window was uncurtained, and she looked in. Old Catharine sat, as usual, crouched on a stool before the fire, immovable, like some curious figure carved in wood. She was not, however, smoking, but, with her short black pipe between her fingers, sat staring at a candle which had flickered and guttered in the draught till it had a great white winding-sheet on it almost as large as itself. Whatever had happened, whoever had come, it was plain that Catharine had heard and seen nothing. Elisabeth turned away from the window and scrutinized the darkness. She could not distinguish the causeway, but in the distance the town, a line of orange lights, gleamed faintly over the flood. A long breath of air came sighing through the trees and passed away down the valley; the water hastened steadily through the lock-gates. Elisabeth remembered Jim, and how he had "come" to father in a dream at the moment of his death. Bessie had never made any promise, like Jim; but Elisabeth could have sworn that as she stood with Tryphena on the other side of the lock she had heard her child's voice crying to her, "Mother!" Something of awe and dread stole over her as she stood alone in the darkness,—awe of the supernatural and dread of what the visitation, if such it were, might portend. The swiftness of things we wonder at is nothing to the swiftness of the thoughts that are ourselves. So if any one had been watching Elisabeth, he would have seen her stand perhaps a minute, looking out towards the lights of the town. Then she turned. The breath of air had passed away, and there was no sound now but the water.

"Bessie," she said, in a quiet, solemn voice, "if it's you, speak to me."

A moan answered her,—a succession of moans. They came from close by. She went on a few steps towards the house, the lantern swinging low from her hand. There was no need to raise it and look round. Bessie was lying on the ground at her feet, against old Catharine's door. The light fell full on her face, as she lay almost upon her back, with her head on the door-step. Her large black hat had not quite fallen off, because it was pinned to her black plaits, but it was crushed and tilted away from her face. Her long fur cloak had fallen open, and showed her hands, tightly clasped together, and her drenched muddy skirts, wrapped and twined about her legs. Her face was pale with an unearthly pallor, such as Elisabeth had never imagined upon it, and there was a blueness about her lips, through which the clinched teeth showed. This was not really the thing which Elisabeth had feared and expected to see, yet it seemed to her that it was so exactly,—that she had come out in order to find Bessie like this. The nightmare foreboding was transformed to a dreadful actuality, yet it still seemed the same nightmare. She dropped on the ground and raised Bessie's head in her arms.

"Bessie,—my dear," she stammered,—“my dear, what is it? How ever come you here?”

The eyes tight shut under the frowning brows opened and looked up at her, dim and bloodshot.

"Oh, mother! how long you've been a-coming!"

It was the old cry of the sick child whose mother has left it alone for a while, and the old answer came, but in tones tremulous with anguish,—

"My love, I come as soon as ever I could."

"Take me home. I want to get home. But, oh, this pain! It's something awful."

The cry pierced Elisabeth's body with an actual physical pang.

"My poor girl! My poor, poor girl!"

Instinctively she tried to lift her child in her arms. At the same time Bessie attempted to rise. With the help of the strong arms behind her, she just struggled to her feet, then, with a dreadful cry, fell heavily against her mother, clutching at her as she fell. So, half held, half holding, she slipped onto her knees, with her head against Elisabeth's hip, smothering her groans in her mother's skirts and clinging convulsively round her waist. Dragging herself backward with her burden, Elisabeth took hold of the latch and shook the closed door violently; but it chanced to be locked. She struck it with her clinched hand till it shook again, shrieking for Catharine. All remained quiet within. Elisabeth felt a terror such as she had never felt before,—the angry terror of helplessness.

"Dern the woman!" she cried. "I'll make her hear, for I can never carry 'ee home."

She tried to go to the window, but could not move for Bessie clinging round her. She tried gently to unclasp the girl's hands.

"Let me go a minute, my love, if 'ee can't get to window. Only a minute, my love."

For a moment Bessie's hold did not relax, then all at once she slid to the ground again, face downward, rolling her forehead on the doorstep. Elisabeth saw old Catharine still sitting before the fire, smoking now and staring into it, while behind her the candle sunk lower in the winding-sheet. Elisabeth pressed her face against the lattice, in hopes that the whiteness of it might catch the deaf woman's quick eye. But old Catharine smoked on. She searched vainly for a stone among the sodden grass and cabbage-stalks at her feet. Large drops of rain fell on her face, and she heard Bessie behind moan through her teeth, like one who struggles bravely to subdue her agony and is subdued by it. The reiterated sound was torture to the mother. Suddenly she thought of the lantern, and, snatching it up, flashed it backward and forward across the window. Catharine looked round with the slow surprise of old age disturbed in its revery, took her pipe out of her mouth, and blinked at the lantern and Elisabeth. Then she put the pipe down on the table and opened the door. She stood on the threshold in the wavering light that streamed from the room within, stooping over Bessie in amazement. Once more Elisabeth put her arms round her daughter, and, pushing Catharine aside, half dragged, half carried her into the house. She tried to put Bessie into the beehive chair by the fire, but she slipped down on the hearth-rug and buried her face in the

torn cushion on the seat, clutching its sides till the joints of her hands showed white. And all the time she did not cease moaning. Elisabeth piled coal on the tiny grate, and shook the kettle to see that there was water in it.

"Catharine," she said, coming near the candle and mouthing, "make a fire up-stairs, please. Sorry to put you out, but we must stop here to-night."

Catharine nodded, and began putting coal into her apron. But Bessie moaned,—

"No, no; not here. I want to get home."

Her voice rose to a wail, and Elisabeth's trembled as she answered,—

"Not now, lovey; to-morrow. 'Tis too wet and dark to-night. I'll go fetch father, and he shall fetch doctor to 'ee."

"Don't go away, mother; don't leave me. Oh, dear, I am so bad!"

"I don't want to leave 'ee, my love, but there's no one else can find things at home, and father he can't make nothing of Catharine. I won't be gone long."

Bessie uttered a sound which might have indicated resignation or reabsorption in that fierce struggle with physical pain which makes thought or feeling outside itself impossible. Elisabeth went out, and, glancing through the window as she passed, saw the huddled figure on the hearth-rug alone in the room. Catharine had gone up-stairs. Bessie had clung to her mother while she was there, yet it was a kind of relief to be left alone with her agony.

Presently Catharine came creaking down the stairs, which led up straight to the bedroom. She came and sat on her low chair, as before, only pushing it farther back, and, chin on hand, considered Bessie, with mingled curiosity and compassion.

"What's the matter?" she croaked, after a while. "Why have you come home? Got into trouble, eh? eh?"

Bessie lifted her head and turned a ghastly face upon her questioner. She pointed to the tin box, which stood by itself on a high shelf, and made a motion as of drinking.

"The bottle," she said. "The charm—the cure for Love, I took it. What was it?"

Old Catharine understood. She fell a-trembling.

"Oh, you fool,—you fool, Bessie Vyne! I told you the chap had poisoned himself. How should I know what it was? I didn't want to let you have it, now, did I? As like as not it's poison you've been and took."

Bessie caught the drift of her talk.

"I didn't care," she gasped. "I thought, let it be kill or cure." And she turned to moaning again, her face in her arms.

Catharine chattered hoarsely to herself.

"Oh, you fool, you fool! Who ever'd ha' thought you'd ha' done it? I told her the gentleman would get her into trouble, but she wouldn't mind me, and now as like as not I shall swing for it. I see my winding-sheet coming in the candle all this evening. I knew it

meant no good. Who ever'd ha' thought she'd ha' been that silly, to go poisoning herself with it! Oh, deary me! oh, deary me! What shall I do?"

She was silent; then, leaning forward and laying both hands on Bessie's arm, she said, distinctly,—

"You won't tell on me, my dear, will you? Don't tell, there's a good girl. You swore not to, didn't you? Swore on the Book not to tell."

"I won't tell," moaned Bessie. "I promised not. What's the use?"

Old Catharine was silent again. She rose and lighted a fresh candle, putting away the remnant of the other one. After all, perhaps the winding-sheet was not for her.

Presently Elisabeth returned with Thomas, who had until her arrival been as sceptical as to the existence of her person in trouble as she had been about that of his ghost. Meanwhile Samuel from the rectory had driven over to fetch Tryphena. Bessie allowed herself to be carried up to Catharine's bedroom. Then Thomas, who had as much affection for his youngest daughter as it was in his nature to feel for any one, hastened off to fetch the doctor.

Having got Bessie on to the crazy wooden bed in the little bedroom, Elisabeth tried to undress her patient. She had brought a night-gown from home, for, to her orderly mind, being ill and going to bed implied a night-gown. It was part of the strangeness and wretchedness of the situation that by the time she had pulled off the wet dress, boots, and stockings, Bessie begged her so piteously to desist that she was obliged to leave her lying on the bed half dressed, covered by Catharine's yellow threadbare blanket and blue cotton coverlet. Elisabeth tried every remedy she could think of, but nothing brought the least cessation of the terrible pain. Only to herself the preparation of each in succession brought some relief,—the hope that this one would do Bessie good. At length there was nothing to do but to sit by the bed, giving Bessie her hands and arms to clasp and wring, and herself breaking out every few minutes into half-articulate moans of tenderness and compassion.

"How ever could they send 'ee home in such a state?" she cried.

"They must be a stony-hearted lot."

"They didn't know," gasped Bessie. "I wasn't like this when I started. But I felt queer. I wanted to get home, somehow. Then it came on bad in the train, but I managed to get a cab at Mannington, and drove all the way as far as the end of the causeway. He wouldn't come no further because of the floods, and I'd not got money enough for him." It all came out brokenly.

"But what ever made you so bad, my girl?" asked Elisabeth.

Bessie moaned and turned away without replying. Presently she said,—

"Mother, do you think I'm going to die?"

The word "die" struck on Elisabeth with a cold shock. Instinctively she uttered a vehement denial.

"I thought I wanted to die, but, oh, mother, I don't want to! I don't! When will the doctor come?"

"Soon, lovey, soon."

Perhaps it was really soon, but it seemed a very long while.

At length there was a tread of heavy feet and a sound of men's voices below. Elisabeth went down-stairs and met Thomas coming up.

"I've brought Dr. Bates," he said. "Dr. Thompson's away, and won't be home for a week or more. 'E's as drunk as a lord." And Thomas, indicating, with thumb over shoulder, the doctor in the lower room, smiled the smile of mingled sympathy and contempt which the man of his class commonly bestows on the drunkard of a higher one.

"Oh, dear!" ejaculated Elisabeth, in suppressed dismay.

"'Alf seas over when I found him," continued Thomas, "and been a-goin' at his flask all the way like a good un, on account of the rain."

Elisabeth brought the doctor up. He mounted the stairs carefully; an elderly man, his face very red, his pale blue eyes glassy and fixed. He did not speak much, having sufficient sense left to be afraid to do so. He stood staring at Bessie.

"Got colic, eh? colic?" he said, slowly and with an effort. "A good deal of it about. Brought you some medicine; no doubt will relieve pain."

The room swam round him, and his attention was principally given to remaining himself a fixed point in it. With difficulty he reached the chair which Elisabeth had left by the bed, brought out his watch, and took Bessie's wrist. He sat on there, pretending to feel her pulse. Elisabeth and Thomas stood at the foot of the bed.

"Go away; go, please!" cried Bessie, waving them away. "I'd rather see the doctor alone."

They went out, Elisabeth reluctantly, for she feared that the doctor was too stupefied by drink to understand Bessie's faint and broken talk. Thomas, whose heart had been cheered by several sips from Dr. Bates's flask, went down to Catharine. Elisabeth, lighting a candle-end which she found on the chimney-piece, went into the other bedroom, where Catharine's son had been used to sleep. No one had slept there since. Catharine had kept the furniture only because it was not worth any one's while to buy and fetch it away. The broken crockery, the chair with the seat half out, the dim little glass and worm-eaten wash-stand, were piled on the bedstead and overlaid with dust. There was little except willow branches to be seen from the blindless window, even by day, and now it showed only darkness, thick with soft rain, which whispered among the leaves. From the moment Elisabeth had heard Bessie's voice calling to her across the lock, she had ceased to feel her rheumatism, but now it pained her again. She sat on the bed, waiting for the doctor to come out. He seemed to be a long time, but at length he came, and she drew him into the room.

"Given her medicine," he articulated, slowly. "Going to sleep. Don't 'sturb her."

"What's the matter with her?" Elisabeth asked.

Dr. Bates fell into a portentous solemnity, and made a motion as of drinking.

"The bottle,—the bottle, ma'am. Very sad case, young female."
 Elisabeth was bewildered.

"What bottle, sir?"

"The usu'l thing, I s'pose, Mrs. Vyne,—spir'ts, eau de Cologne,—anything, anything. Females quite incurable; not s'much strength of mind's us."

"Do you mean to say as you fancy my daughter's given to drink, Dr. Bates?" asked Elisabeth, indignantly. "Why, the poor child don't so much as take a glass of ale with her meals."

"Nat'rally annoyed, ma'am, nat'rally. Very common thing, sorry to say,—much on increase 'mong females." He paused, swayed, and burst out with renewed solemnity, "Drink, Mrs. Vyne, drink is the curse this country. Many promising young man—yes, promising—mayn't b'lieve it—promising young feller, been ruined by't—sunk, sunk down, down t' this."

He collapsed on the edge of the bed and sobbed, looking into vacancy. Perhaps he was merely maudlin; perhaps there glimmered into the depths of his poor fuddled mind a consciousness that he was making a terrible muddle of something serious, and at the same time a consciousness of hopeless inability to clear and bestir his drenched faculties.

"I'm afraid you're not in a fit state to attend my daughter to-night, Dr. Bates," said Elisabeth, severely.

"No, no, 'm, not very well, Mrs. Vyne." He rose, and made a great effort to control himself. "Severe cold. Weather so very bad, Mrs. Vyne. Floods rising all day; going to be very heavy flood. Better get home at once, night so dark. Call and see your daughter t'morrow morning; hope to find her better. Good-evening, good-evening."

Dr. Bates stumbled down the steep stairs, and, assisted by Thomas, crossed, not without danger and difficulty, the lock and the meadow, to the Manor, where he had left his cart.

Elisabeth returned to the other bedroom. Bessie had drawn the blanket over her head, and, whereas she had before tossed ceaselessly from one side of the bed to the other, she now lay quite still, moaning at almost regular intervals. The doctor had said she was not to be disturbed, and Elisabeth sat down by the fire, listening uneasily to her moans. Presently they ceased, and were succeeded by deep breathing. Otherwise there was no sound except the occasional dropping of a coal from the grate and the even whisper of the rising waters round the house. Elisabeth dropped asleep. She woke with a start, and for some reason the deep breathing and complete stillness of the figure on the bed, which had at first reassured, now alarmed her. She stole up and drew the blanket from Bessie's face. Elisabeth had little experience of illness, but it immediately struck her that the girl was not asleep, but unconscious. There was no one else in the house, except old Catharine. It was now the middle of the night. Her thoughts turned for a moment only to Dr. Bates. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to get him at that hour, and in such weather. Elisabeth was like many women of her class, patient to a fault. She did all that

she could think of to rouse Bessie, and then sat down by the bed, with anguish in her heart, to wait for the day. She took a battered old prayer-book from the drawers, and read the prayers for the sick to herself with muttering lips; but her thoughts were not with them. They centred round the dread that Bessie was going to be taken from her. From that centre sprang many recollections of the three-and-twenty years of her child's life,—recollections sweet in themselves, except those of the last year. Elisabeth saw now clearly what she had before only vaguely felt,—that on the day she had gone to the Meades to tell them about Geoffrey and Bessie a chasm had opened between her and her best-beloved child,—a chasm which had been widening ever since. She did not put it to herself like that. She said there was a coldness; Bessie had never loved her so much since then. And suddenly it came upon her that Bessie had been justified in not doing so. She had not been able to understand all that her lover had meant to Bessie; she had taken him from her girl as one might take a stolen toy from a child. It would be a dreadful thing if Bessie died without being reconciled to her. Died! Why should Bessie die? She was young and strong. Yet Elisabeth could not shake off this fear that Bessie was dying, dying now. She rose very often, and, leaning over her daughter, spoke to her; but there was no reply.

At length, when several seemingly interminable hours had passed, a change came over Bessie. Her breathing was no longer audible; she lay like a waxen image on the bed, with closed eyes and a look of repose on her refined and sharpened features. Elisabeth could not tell what the change might mean. Presently she leaned over and spoke to her again:

"Bessie, Bessie, my love. It's mother. Mother's here, my dear."

There was no response, but, while she still hung over the bed, Bessie's dark eyes opened slowly.

"Are you feeling better now, my dear?" asked Elisabeth.

"Yes—no," answered Bessie, and her faint voice had a cracked, far-away sound in it. "I think I'm going to die."

She spoke with indifference, and closed her eyes again.

"Don't you think that, my girl," returned Elisabeth, with enforced cheerfulness. "You're too young and strong to die off sudden, this way."

Bessie spoke again, indifferently as before, not moving, but turning her dull eyes on her mother.

"But it was poison what I took."

Elisabeth could not repress a groan.

"Poison? Oh, Lord! Not o' purpose, Bessie,—not o' purpose?"

"Yes—I don't hardly know. I didn't care what happened to me. It was because of Geoffrey."

Elisabeth's limbs would no longer support her. She fell on her knees at the side of the bed, and took Bessie's hand between hands that trembled.

"The Lord forgive 'ee, my girl, the Lord forgive 'ee!"

"I couldn't go on there," continued Bessie, her voice, indifferent as before, getting fainter. "I might have gone away with Mr. Causton,

but I'm not that sort; I couldn't; nor I couldn't stay, neither. I was that miserable I didn't know what to do."

"Oh, pray to the Lord for forgiveness, my dear!" cried Elisabeth. "But if you was miserable, why couldn't you come home to your own mother?"

"You'd have made me marry Percy Hicks, I know you would," returned Bessie, a little querulous, her fingers picking at the counterpane. "You shouldn't have taken Geoffrey away from me. I told you you'd kill me; but you didn't care. Why couldn't you leave me Geoffrey? You came up to London on purpose to see I didn't get him."

"Oh, hush, hush, my lovey! I don't know what 'ee do mean. I did never come up to London."

"Yes, yes,—that night. I wasn't certain then, but now I know 'twas you. You were set on taking him from me. Well, you've done it. There'll be no more trouble now for any one." Her eyelids drooped and her voice died down, murmuring something about how "they all took him away from me,—took you, Geoffrey."

Elisabeth broke in passionately:

"Bessie, Bessie, my love, don't break mother's heart! Don't cast it up agen me, my dear! I only wanted to do right. I see now as I made a mistake, and sorry enough I am; Lord knows I'm sorry. Can't 'ee forgive me, my girl? Don't 'ee think mother loves 'ee?"

Bessie answered nothing. While Elisabeth leaned over her, her eyelids flickered and closed. Elisabeth put her face close down to her daughter's.

"Bessie," she said, "just speak to me once again. Just move a bit if 'ee hear me say I'm sorry. I'm mortal sorry, my love. It wer all a mistake. Mother didn't know. Mother always loved 'ee best,—better'n any of 'em, except Jim. Bessie! Bessie! You're never going without another word—Oh, Lord, she don't hear what I say!" Elisabeth broke off and waited in silent anguish for some reply; but there was neither sound nor motion. Bessie breathed, but the dignity and repose of death were already upon her face. Elisabeth sank on her knees by the bed. Her hands clutched the bedclothes, and her face was buried in them.

"O Lord, have mercy upon her poor soul! Don't let her pass and not say nothing to me. Lord, forgive her her great sin, for Christ's sake! It was my fault, it was. Lord, let her know I'm sorry before she goes!" Again she hung over Bessie in eager expectancy, and, finding no change in her, kneeled once more, wrestling in prayer that her daughter's sin might be forgiven, and that she might be reconciled to her mother before she died.

So, alternately praying and watching, she passed the last hour of the night. Towards morning the dying girl turned on her side and breathed a long, quiet sigh. Elisabeth started up, and leaned above her, feeling her hand and listening for her breath. At length she knew that Bessie was dead; then with tears and terrible sobs she entreated the dead to return, return only for a moment, and hear mother say she was sorry.

XXI.

Thomas sat milking in the early dusk. The lantern stood beside him on the ground, and he leaned his forehead on the cow's warm side and milked mechanically, lulled almost to sleep by the rhythm of the milk falling into the pail. Suddenly he looked up, feeling that some one else was there. Elisabeth stood in the stable doorway. She came to tell him that Bessie was dead.

Elisabeth had also come to fetch a hand-truck on which the milk tins were sometimes taken to the town. She wanted to bring Bessie home. Bessie had wanted to go home, and she had promised she would take her in the morning. Besides, the floods were rising, and by midday the ground-floor of the Round House might be under water.

At break of day they brought her home across the fields. The floods were no longer vaporously still under a gray sky. A fresh breeze bent the willows and hurried the surface of the water along in tiny crests that caught the light. A great orange sunrise shot up its ragged edges half-way to the zenith, and reflected itself on the distant water in obscure yellow. The body was laid on the low truck, which was just long enough for it, and covered with a sheet. Elisabeth dragged it, and Catharine assisted with her hand on the shaft of the handle. Sometimes she looked back, sometimes peered in Elisabeth's face, with a look half sympathetic, half terrified. Yet she had a consolation which she did not mention. The winding-sheet had not been for her this time, at any rate. They were obliged to go slowly, because the truck jolted over the matted tufts of meadow grass. Thomas walked behind to steady it. Bessie's death had been so sudden that he was unable to realize it. Yet it was not according to his notions of decorum that such a procession as this should move unaccompanied by weeping and mourning. So even while he was bent almost double, pushing the truck, he held to his eyes a pocket-handkerchief, with which he had supplied himself before leaving the Manor; and when he stood up he sighed heavily from time to time, and made a remark or ejaculation, such as, "Poor Bessie! our youngest child, 'Lisabeth! Such a fine girl as that, to be took off so sudden! It's a great loss, a very heavy loss to us, I'm sure."

When they reached the house he was surprised and pained at Elisabeth's leaving Catharine to lay out the corpse. There might have been a difficulty in getting it up the narrow stairs, and it was laid out on the table in the large parlor,—the same table at which Geoffrey used to sit by the light of the smoky lamp, trying to think about his work, and irresistibly impelled to think about Bessie. When all was done, Thomas looked for Elisabeth, but her bedroom door was locked, and she did not answer when he called her. So he addressed Catharine, for want of any one else to address:

"I'm goin' off to town to tell her aunt and uncle Filkins. It'll be an awful thing for them to hear all on a sudden, won't it? They won't 'ardly believe me when I tell 'em; but I should like 'em to see her laid out so beautiful. Then there's the rector; and I dare say Mrs.

Dangerfield and Miss Tryphena 'ud take it as a compliment if I asked 'em to step round and see 'er."

Catharine nodded without understanding, and he left the house in real tears and his black clothes.

After a while he returned, deeply depressed. The floods were out all round the Manor, worse than he had ever known them, and a rickety little bridge, which had long carried the farm-track over a back-water, had given way. It was no wonder that Uncle Lambert had not appeared, though his usual hour was long past. Thomas looked for Elisabeth again, and found her in the kitchen. She had got the big churn there, and was working it. He sat down on a chair by the door and told her about the floods, and all that he and Catharine had been doing, crying all the while. She did not seem to take much notice of what he was saying.

"I wonder at you, Lizzie, that I do!" he sobbed, incensed, "'avin' the 'eart to make butter the very day as we've lost our youngest daughter."

Elisabeth paused. She took her handkerchief from the dresser and wiped the sweat from her brow and the blinding tears from her eyes.

"There's no sense in letting the cream go sour," she said.

THE TREND OF HORTICULTURE.

UNTAMED nature thinks only of the perpetuation of its species.

The wild plants of field and forest, luxuriating in the warming rays of the summer sun, extract from the soil the nourishment and vitality essential to the completion of their little round of life; and then, having passed through their short cycle of existence, from the bursting bud to the ripened fruit, they droop and die. The mysterious operation of growth and death is repeated season by season, and one generation is but a reduplication of all others, modified slightly by peculiar conditions of soil and climate. The pattern of nature is spread out with glorious possibilities, but the individual efforts of the plants to raise themselves above their kind are abortive. Their hopes are blasted in the bud, flower, or fruit: the limitations imposed upon them prove insurmountable barriers.

Improvement and progressive development begin with man. The struggling plant that has outstripped its kind and stands on the verge of decay, knowing that it will be replaced the following season by another whose feeble growth may neutralize all the good that it has accomplished, suddenly finds itself lifted to more congenial surroundings. The mere struggle for a precarious existence instantly ceases to absorb all its strength and powers. The arbitrary laws of nature can no longer limit development and expansion, and the plant has leisure and opportunity to cultivate the beauties and refinements of a new life.

The flowers take on a fairer and more delicate hue, improving in size and beauty by slow magical processes; the foliage intensifies in strength and color to form a fitting background for the blossoms; and the maturing fruits develop a sweetness and lusciousness heretofore existent only in a potential state. The plants slowly differentiate from their kind, assuming the appearances and characteristics of a new order, retaining, however, enough of the blood of their ancestors to drag them down to the level of their old primal stock, if once freed from man's control and left to their mutual selection.

It is by eternal vigilance that the gains made in fruit- and flower-culture are maintained: a few years of neglect or relaxation may undo the work of ages. The plants left to themselves are unable to retain the artificial fruits and flowers that have been acquired through careful culture and selection. The old tainted blood of their wild progenitors is strong within them, and is merely held in abeyance while they thrive and flourish in their new surroundings. Man has been able to raise himself above the wild, barbarous conditions of primitive life, and by virtue of the power inherent within him he can retain these gifts, even as he wrested them from unwilling nature; but the plants of the fields, the flowers of the garden, and the fruits of the orchard are in constant danger of degeneration.

Every wild plant and grass contains unknown possibilities that require years of careful culture and selection to measure. The horti-

culturist receives his cue from nature,—some simple suggestion in the wild plant that leads to the fulfilment of its higher life. The starch in the bulbous growth is no more an accident than the sugar in the beet or the cottony substance in the seed-pods of some upland plants. The beautiful flowers of one order suggest the purpose for which nature designed them, as surely as the fruits of the trees and shrubs reveal their place in the beneficent plan of creation. The horticulturist does not create; he simply discovers undeveloped organs, and moulds them for the useful or ornamental.

Half the flora of the world still contains the riddle of the Sphinx. Three thousand years of study and experiment have merely brought a handful of species of plants into successful cultivation, while the vast majority hold their secret for future generations to solve. In the economy of nature they only work out their purpose half-heartedly, and often to the detriment of those who are placed as guardians over them. They are still the wild, sour grapes of the primitive forest, or the bitter, acid fruits of the thornapple-tree.

The present trend of horticulture is both intensive and expansive. Never before in the history of the world was such intensive culture given to the fruits and flowers that have been in use since the dawn of civilization; and no less energetic are the students who are laboring to extend the practical field of horticulture by discovering the value of new plants and trees. Every year some new wild plants are found to repay the cost of cultivating them, and the world is made richer in the possession of a food, flower, or textile material that caters to our happiness. Others that we hear little of are on the high-road of improvement, and need but some slight cross-fertilization or artificial grafting to make their success permanent.

In all this work of extending the boundaries of horticultural art there is no greater reward for the laborers than the consciousness of having benefited mankind. Some arid region whose barren soil refuses to give nourishment to any food-plants may suddenly blossom as the rose because of the adaptation of plants to the apparently uncongenial surroundings, and a dense population may dwell in peace and comfort where before nothing but desolation reigned. This is not fancy, but a fact of history. In the improvement of wild grasses alone in the past half-century, agriculture has been made possible upon millions of acres of land that were totally neglected before. Originally there were no "tame" grasses, and nearly all that we cultivate to-day to feed our stock are less than one hundred and thirty years of age. Timothy, orchard, red-top, and Kentucky blue were then as wild as our buffalo grass, grama, or the wheat grass of the Western plains.

Through successive years of culture and selection they were improved and scattered broadcast over the world, conquering regions that were barren and sterile, and converting whole townships into grazing-fields for countless herds of cattle. It is not likely that we have found and brought under cultivation all the useful wild grasses, any more than we have reached the end of fruit- and flower-culture. So long as there are barren plains, unfertile fields and hill-sides, and great arid regions, the incentive to discover new and useful grasses will continue.

Even now in our wild Western regions there are promising wild grasses that are attracting the attention of the scientific world, and which may yet make our barren lands blossom as our Eastern fields. The big blue-stem (*Andropogon provincialis* Lam.), the bushy blue-stem (*Andropogon nutans* Lam.), and the wild June grass (*Koeleria cristata* Pers.) may become in time rivals to our Kentucky blue grass, or the mountain timothy (*Alopecurus pratensis* L. var. *alpestris*) and the wheat grass (*Agropyrum glaucum*) equal in value to red-top or common timothy. The buffalo bunch grass (*Festuca scabrella* Torr.), the wild ribbon grass (*Phalaris arundinacea* L.), and the large bent grass (*Agrostis grandis* Trin.) also have valuable qualities that may create a transformation in the Western plains greater than the discovery of irrigation.

This improvement properly comes under agriculture, but it touches horticultural development so closely that it serves to point the line of advance. In the introduction of new fruits the field is more limited, but the adaptation of old fruits to new regions is fully of as great economical importance as the discovery of practically wild ones. Florida and California furnish startling examples of the value of this work. The tropics and semi-tropics of two hemispheres are being ransacked for fruits and flowers that will bear transplanting to the two great garden regions of our country. There is first adaptation, and then improvement. One group of horticulturists interested in extending the area of fruit- and flower-culture introduces the promising plants; another group applies the intensive system of culture, and gradually evolves new varieties and classes, enriching the world with luscious or beautiful products.

California and Florida landscapes present a vivid contrast to what they did fifty years ago. The work of extending the range of horticulture in these States has gone on apace in the last quarter of a century. First the orange monopolized the attention of growers; then the grapes and peaches proclaimed a new era, followed successively by pears, apricots, plums, lemons, prunes, olives, grapefruit, limes, citrons, dates, figs, pineapples, nuts, guavas, pawpaws, mangoes, tamarinds, and in fact nearly all the fruits embraced in the tropical and semi-tropical zones. There are few products of the soil that will not thrive in the genial climate of these two States, and when once introduced they invariably distinguish each year of their growth in their land of adoption by some improvement.

The intensive trend of horticulture is probably more effective in its immediate results, and more generally recognized, than the expansive movement. For ages the world was satisfied with the few fruits and flowers that had been slowly raised from their wild state by a semi-scientific method of propagation. Fertile soils and genial climates had done much to develop the plants and to unloose the luscious sweetness of their fruits, but no one imagined what higher results could be obtained by close, systematic, intensive culture. What sweeter flowers, what greater varieties of fruits, and what marvellous growths of trees and shrubs these early stocks have been made to produce under the stimulus of intelligently directed culture!

The apple has been budded and grafted, crossed and re-crossed, and artificially developed, until the almost worthless wild fruits have been succeeded by thousands of cultivated sorts,—sweet, sour, and bitter apples, early, late, tender, and hardy varieties, mealy and juicy, small and large apples of every conceivable kind. There are apple-trees to suit every kind of soil, climate, and position, and the horticulturist still looks for further improvements. The season of apples has been extended from four or five months to ten or eleven months in our temperate zones by the improvement of late and early varieties. The size and quality of every sort increase as the science of their culture extends, and one acre now produces more fruits than five did in earlier days.

Viticulture has kept pace with apple-culture, and from the vineyards come grapes of such lusciousness and variety that the limits of improvement seem well-nigh reached. The peach orchards of our country are great monuments to the progress of our modern intensive horticulture. Peaches from the Orient and the Occident have contributed to the success of our Maryland and Delaware orchards, but through the moulding hands of the horticulturist the primal stock has been changed and transformed beyond recognition, producing fruits that are far beyond any of Persian or Chinese origin. The Citrus fruits came out of the semi-tropical forests, where nature gives the plants the widest latitude for self-improvement and development, but their usefulness begins with man's first attempt to cultivate them, and from the sour and bitter fruits they have advanced to the highest types of lusciousness. Of the smaller fruits and berries the like can be said. The improvement of established varieties, the creation of new ones that outshine their predecessors, and the intensive development of valuable qualities in all, are features of modern horticulture that have never been surpassed.

But the limit of improvement is not found in producing fruits of great size, beauty, and sweetness. There are other desirable qualities that the horticulturist is anxious to obtain, and toward this end he is devoting his energies. One of the most noticeable trends of the science of fruit-culture is toward the elimination of undesirable organs. The thorns of some of the Citrus fruit-trees, and the prickles of such small berry-bushes as the gooseberry, blackberry, and raspberry, are protuberances that have outlived their usefulness and are highly unpleasant. They not only puncture the ripening fruits, but they often make harvesting exceedingly inconvenient. Gardeners have long wished to do away with these thorns and prickles, but it is only comparatively recently that systematic efforts have been made to eliminate them.

The thorns are conspicuous organs of our cultivated plants that have ceased to be of any value, for their original purpose of protecting the plants from animals has no force to-day in the gardens and fields. They should have been exterminated long ago. Through the careful selection of plants that happen to be thornless, stocks are obtained for a new race of thornless plants. Others are noted for the few thorns that grow on them, and by judicious selection of seeds and grafts from these the same work is continued. Already gardeners

have cultivated raspberry and blackberry canes that are entirely thornless, and by grafting improved varieties on these the desired end will soon be reached. The wild orange-trees have many more thorns on them than the budded stock, and the wild Florida lemons are thickly studded with thorns, while the grafted La France have none. The high-priced King orange, one of the best mandarins raised in Cochin-China, is extremely thorny, but in Florida the thorns have been gradually diminished by selecting buds from branches with the smallest number on them.

More important probably than eliminating the thorns on trees and bushes is the extermination of objectionable seeds. The seeds of oranges, grapes, apples, pears, and similar fruits are no longer absolutely necessary for the production of plants and trees. Nature slowly and grudgingly relinquishes her right to mature seeds,—the secret that she has guarded so carefully for perpetuating many of her choicest species. Before horticulture was reduced to a science, most plants depended upon the seeds for their existence, but in these modern days, when budded and grafted stock give more satisfaction than seedlings, they are superfluous to a degree. We might not be able to get along without any seeds, for seedling stock must continue to be raised so long as fruit-trees are in demand; but, as all choice stock is budded or grafted, the seeds of our leading varieties of oranges, lemons, grapes, and apples could be easily dispensed with.

Nature has suggested the way in this as in other lines of improvement. The banana is practically seedless, although at one time these organs of propagation may have been fully developed. In each banana undeveloped rows of seeds are found. By cutting the fruit down through the middle the rudimentary seeds are exposed in the shape of little brown spots. At present the banana is propagated entirely by suckers which grow up at the base of the main stalk, but by careful selection and culture the seeds could in the course of half a century be developed so that they would reproduce their kind. They are not needed to-day, but nature could fall back upon them and save the plants from extermination if for any reason the suckers should refuse to perform their functions. A few wild bananas have been found that had fully developed seeds, and we may suppose that at one time some of these plants were actually propagated in this way.

The pineapple is nearly seedless, but, like the banana, it produces rudimentary seeds in the fruit, which at times approach closely to fully developed ones. The plants increase their growth by means of suckers and slips, and it is probably through a long period of such propagation that the seeds gradually degenerated. Nature never wastes her energies. If any organ becomes useless, she is apt to neglect it, so that in time it ceases to occupy any prominent part in the economy of the plant's life. The egg-plant is another fruit whose seeds are gradually becoming less important in its propagation, and occasionally the flowers are produced without the accompanying seeds. Moreover, this plant is frequently able to produce developed flowers or fruits without any fertilization of the blossoms.

All these hints and suggestions of nature have been acted upon by

the gardener, and for years now more or less systematic efforts have been made to get rid of seeds in certain fruits. Several varieties of apples and pears have been propagated that are almost seedless. They are not looked upon with great favor as yet by horticulturists, because they are more the freaks of nature than the results of careful culture and selection. They are called "bloomless," and the fruits are small, poor in flavor, and oddly shaped. Nevertheless they may become the foundation of a future seedless stock that will prove of great value. It would not be the first time that a freak of nature had been converted into a horticultural advantage. There is no better illustration of this than the discovery and propagation of the California navel orange.

The navel orange is merely an abnormal growth,—an abortive attempt of nature to produce twins. One of the twins failed, however, and survived only as a protuberance in the blossom end of the orange, forming a little navel-like kernel enveloped in the skin of the fruit. The buds from the trees producing these freaks were grafted upon other stock, and gradually the semi-dwarf navel-orange-tree was established in California, becoming one of the most profitable growths in the State. The original trees of this stock came from Bahia, Brazil, where their tendency to produce this peculiar freak had been noticed before, but no one had acted upon the suggestion of nature until they were transplanted to their new home on the Pacific coast. In her effort to produce twins in the navel orange, nature made her first sacrifice of seeds, and this variety of orange is very frequently seedless. The few seeds that are found in some of the fruits are small and undeveloped.

California and Florida growers are now trying to produce seedless oranges on all their grafted trees, and with such an example as the navel to start with success is almost positively assured. Several other varieties have already been produced which are noted for the small and insignificant seeds found in the fruits, and by constant selection of buds from the branches of these trees the process of elimination of the seeds will continue.

California gardeners, realizing the immense value of their grape and raisin crop, are diligently trying to obtain seedless grapes as well, and toward this end the best intelligence of the State is directed. The object in view is to obtain seedless grapes without sacrificing the size and quality of the fruits for which California has become noted. There are varieties of seedless grapes or currants which may have been produced long ago by careful culture and selection, or which may have been the result of another of nature's strange freaks. The most conspicuous of these seedless grapes are those raised in Southeastern Europe and sold in this country as Sultana raisins, and the seedless "currants" of Corinth. The latter are practically grapes of a very small kind, but when dried they are sold as currants. In California both of these seedless fruits have been established, and efforts have been made to increase their size and quality in their new home. But this process is slow and apparently fruitless of satisfactory results, and gardeners are now devoting their time to the elimination of seeds from the leading grape of the State, the famous Muscat of Alexandria.

The process is similar to that with all other fruits in which the seeds are to be reduced in size and number. Cuttings are taken from vines which produce grapes with less than the normal number of seeds, and this process is repeated year by year until the grapes become absolutely seedless.

It is not impossible to reduce in size and number the small seeds of blackberries and raspberries, and even the seeds of currants. Gardeners have succeeded so well in this respect that the core and seeds of the modern cultivated varieties of blackberries are less than one-third as prominent as in the wild sorts. Currants and gooseberries have been doubled and tripled in size, while the seeds have been reduced and the skins made tender and less objectionable. Our future small berries may grow upon bushes without thorns, and the fruits will be large, luscious, and attractive, without cores or seeds of any kind.

Such are the modern aims in horticulture. Nature is so pliable in the hands of the scientist that she is bent and adapted to the needs of the nineteenth-century civilization. She can be wooed, but not forced, to do the bidding of man along lines so wonderful that the uninitiated are astounded, for those who see only the results without the pains and patience required to accomplish them must regard it all as a profound mystery. But the process is slow, and ages may be needed to accomplish what can be described in five minutes.

George Ethelbert Walsh.

AT BRIDGE TWENTY-TWO.

FAINT and faint the far, thin ringing of bugles floated down the valley, under the stars. Taps,—lights out: the musical call went on, rising, falling, softer, softer, slowly dying in a minor cadence that lost itself upon the air.

A ghostly shiver crept from the hollows of the hills; thin white mists rose over the marsh-land by the hill-foot; along the ridge, half-way up the slope, clear against the purple dark, a line of gray hung in the air, dropping slowly, slowly, to meet the mists below. A slender moon slid down behind the ragged trees that cut the sky. Here and there, in the dusk of the hills, an uncurtained window sent bars of orange light wavering across the night. In the narrow valley a stream crept sluggishly, turning, twisting, sinuously bending back its slow current between low banks of sodden earth. Along its course grew slender cottonwoods and writhing willows: rank weeds, which overtopped a man, stretched away on either hand, to meet the marsh-reeds by the hills. The dark line of a railway embankment was ruled along the valley, its bridges black above the black windings of the stream. At one side, the gaunt, charred frame of a coal-tipple rose spectral in the uncertain light: a tramway made a faint gray line into the farther gloom.

The little gully of a watercourse, dry now, in the heat of June,

ran back from the river, near the bridge. Leaning against the side of it, nearly hid in its shallow depth, stood a man, slouch-hatted, clad in blue, a rifle in his hands. Almost motionless he stood, watching a path which led across a clear space before him, losing itself, on the other side, among the weeds and ragged trees. Near him the track dipped suddenly into the gully: the end of it was just under the long bridge that loomed against the sky.

Up on the hill-side a glare of light flashed out for an instant; and the sentry turned to look that way.

That, he thought, was from the door: the meeting was over; and if the miners were going to do anything, now was the time.

He watched the path more closely, fingering the hammer of his rifle, and then glanced at the bridge. For three days he and the rest of the force had been guarding that bridge and the others, watching the mine-buildings and the coal-trains on the sidings, holding this section of a great railway open to traffic. Three days; it seemed a month since they had swung down the narrow valley, driving the rioting coal-miners before them, seeing the flames go up from burning buildings and wrecked coal-trains. Then the long, burning days and the chill, mist-laden nights; nights when men crept through the bushes and fired upon the sentries and the camp; when a flash in the darkness and the rattling echo of a rifle-shot told that some prowler had been discovered by the pickets on the hill.

Along the embankment, by the bridge, sentries paced slowly up and down: at the bridge-head was an open pen of railway-ties, within which others of the guard were sleeping, or watching the approaches. Two attempts had been made to blow up the long spans with dynamite; another, so came the rumor, would be made, perhaps, to-night. In an old house on the hill the striking miners were holding a meeting,—Poles and Sclavs, Hungarians and Italians, mingled together, joined in a common hatred of the mine-owners, the railway company, and the State troops. For a time they had checked all traffic on the road; not a train rolled its wheels over it: now they were helpless; and the long coal-trains rushed westward, hour by hour, thundering by, making up for the lost days of the blockade.

Knife and gun, bludgeon and torch, were the weapons of the rioters. No soldier dared go alone into the town up the line, or to stray far beyond the limits of the camp: one, found insensible, cruelly beaten, was a warning to the rest. A shot at night, a shower of stones, a bullet from a revolver,—these were the things the guardsmen might expect and did receive. The wells from which the camp drew its supply of water were poisoned; curses, taunts, and jeers met them on every side.

The white mist was spreading out over the valley; uncertain tree-lines wavered through it; the sharp edges of the bridge's skeleton frame melted into the growing obscurity. A soft rush through the air startled the sentry as a night-bird swept before his face; from the purple-shadowed hills came a whippoorwill's hoarse-throated cry. Out in the grasses of the open space beyond the little ravine the crickets shrilled unceasingly; a drowsy bird-note sounded from the

willows. The night was full of noises, noises which were its accompaniment, which did not dominate the ear but were heard unnotingly, and were but part of a vast, indistinguishable murmur, unless the sense bent to catch one individual note, which then thrilled upon it, excluding other sounds. Through them all, any unaccustomed, unwonted noise cut sharply; the rattle of a steel-shod rifle-butt against a rail; the long howling of a dog far down the valley; the crack and sputter of a lighted match as an officer looked at his watch; the untimely crowing of a cock.

The sentry shivered a little; the air was growing damp and chill: he pulled the cape of his overcoat about him, and sunk his head between the flaps of its upturned collar, wondering how long he had been on post, and if it were not almost time for the relief. What was the use of putting him out here in the dry stream-bed? Could not any prowlers be seen from the embankment before they could reach the bridge to blow it up?

He could not see far in any direction save in front; on right and left the turnings of the little watercourse shut off the view; behind him the tall weeds grew to the gully's edge. In front was the clearing, a blot of lighter gray in the surrounding darkness of the woods and undergrowth, its boundaries changing uncertainly as the mist shifted, now stretching back illimitably far, or closing up, suddenly, until the ghost arms of the sycamores seemed almost to touch him. There was no space to pace up and down: the loose stones prevented noiseless movement: so the sentry remained in one place, leaning against the clayey bank, his rifle held across his arms, to be dropped to the ready in an instant. Now and then he lifted his feet, one after the other, or stretched himself, with a long breath. Once he brought a pipe from his pocket, looked at it reflectively, and put the stem in his mouth: the poor substitute for smoking did not satisfy him, and he replaced the pipe in his pocket.

There came a sudden, soft patter behind him, and he turned, startled. The sound came again, from the other side: he turned again, quickly, half raising his rifle and peering into the shadow of the trees. The soft pat, pat, was repeated, increased, came again and again: he stood with strained attention, until, at last, he gave a low laugh of self-derision and leaned against the bank once more, as he understood that what he heard was but the drop, drop, of the gradually accumulating moisture on the broad leaves. Down the gully he heard a little rattle of loosened earth and stones; a water-rat stole like a shadow over a broad white rock, and fled at sight of him; by the river and over in the marshes the frogs were piping and booming.

The sentry looked at the point on the hill-side from which came little streaks and fading lines of light. There, in an old deserted mine-building, the meeting of the miners was being held. What would they decide to do? What new devilment, he wondered, were they up to? There was no chance that they would return to work; the word for that, he knew, had not yet come from the head of their organization. Some mischief, further destruction, was being planned: those who would undertake its execution would be primed with liquor,

reckless, desperate. He wished that they would begin their work, if any were to be done: this watching was long and lonely. Picket was better than this; on picket he could talk to his companion; here was not even the "All's well" of the sentries or the challenge of the rounds. The door of the old barn on the hill opened again; he could see figures passing out, vaguely black against the glare: then the light went out.

The sentry straightened himself, and took a new attitude of listening. From far down the valley came an increasing rumble and rattle; a long coal-train rushed by, a fiery glow lighting up the night as the fireman swung open the door of the furnace. The train swept on into the darkness; the rumble and roar hung heavily on the air.

Over on the right, near the railway, came the sharp crack of a revolver; not a service arm, he knew by the sound, but one of lighter calibre. Then silence again: no one seemed to pay any attention to the shot. The sentry peered more earnestly into the mist; there was a nervous tension in his strained attitude; his fingers gripped tighter the rifle-stock, and he turned his head from side to side quickly, as one who hears strange, sudden, inexplicable sounds whose direction he cannot determine. He turned down the collar of his overcoat, as though it impeded his hearing or his sight; he threw back the cape, giving his arms free play with the rifle. Gradually the tension passed; his rigid muscles relaxed; he dropped the muzzle of his piece, and leaned once more against the bank. Some one walked across the bridge; the sound of steps on the ties came clear through the still air. It seemed to him that he had never heard anything so plainly in his whole life; every little sound came fully to his ears. Surely no one could steal up and fell him with a blow, as was done to that other sentry. At the thought he straightened and half came to the guard; the strap rattled as he snapped the rifle to place. Then he leaned back again, with a smile at his sudden flurry.

Something stole into the clearing, noiselessly, like a shadow, close to the ground. He stood with strained gaze, staring into the misty space, and slowly raised the rifle to his shoulder, throwing back the hammer as he lifted the piece. At the little click of the lock the shadow moved again, turned, and fled swiftly and silently into the woods. The sentry made an impatient movement with his foot, and lowered the rifle. A fox, that was all, he thought; but it had startled him, and he did not relax his gaze, glancing here and there, on all sides.

He sprang suddenly erect. From along the railway a shot rang out,—the rattling bang of a Springfield. Then came the muffled thud and crash of stones hurled through tree-boughs, followed by rifle- and revolver-shots. The sound of swiftly running feet came to him, and then the noises died away.

He moved cautiously to the other side of the gully and crouched lower, his face, shadowed by the gray hat-brim, just above the bank, as he strove to see beyond the clearing, into the mouth of the path among the weeds. He moved his rifle; it struck against the bank, and the bayonet caught in something, a root or vine. With a muttered ex-

clamation he disengaged it and crossed to his former place. He felt that he had been watching the little clearing for hours and hours; he was stiff from standing still; his arms suddenly ached from the weight of the rifle, and he found he had unconsciously been holding it at the ready for he knew not how long. He lowered the butt to the ground cautiously, and fumbled around beneath his overcoat until he found a dark handkerchief, with which he wiped his face. He wondered, idly, why his face should be wet with sweat when the air was so chill.

There came a noise from across the gully, a rustle from among the tall weeds under the willows. The handkerchief dropped, and he raised the rifle from the ground. From the railway came another rush and roar as another train rolled rapidly by, drowning all other noises. The sentry glanced impatiently at the train as it sped away, and then redoubled the intensity of his gaze into the thin mist.

At the mouth of the path, on the edge of the weeds, the figure of a man appeared, hardly distinguishable against the dark mass behind him. The sentry opened his lips to cry, "Halt!" but checked himself. A second man joined the first, who had stopped a few feet from the trees; and then a third came out of the bush-path. The three stood there, looking toward the bridge: one pointed at it, and the three laughed softly. The sentry wondered, irritably, why they laughed. One, who carried something in his hands, spoke: the sentry could not understand what he said; it sounded like a foreign language. He wished it had been English.

The three moved forward, cautiously.

"Halt! Who goes there?"

The sentry's call came sharply to the three; they paused, and then moved on again.

"Halt! Who goes there?"

They did not stop, but came on more quickly.

"Halt! Halt! or I fire!"

The three were not halted; they were coming swiftly, running now. He could hear their feet as they pounded along.

He raised his rifle quickly. The hammer went back with a click. How long, it seemed to him, it took to get the rifle to his shoulder! Why did they not halt? Would he have to shoot a man?

He was trembling violently; the rifle wavered in his grasp. He felt that he could not hit any of the men; and a thought of flight came to him. He glanced down the ravine, and wondered if the three could reach him, if he ran, before the guard came up. How long it took for the men to cross the clearing! They were only half across! How slowly they ran!

"Halt!" he called again; but his voice was gone, and even to himself the cry seemed barely audible.

His left hand tightened upon the barrel; he drew himself up straighter and fell into the position for firing, without conscious action. His left elbow rested against his breast; his finger pressed the trigger. To himself he was saying, over and over, "Aim! Fire! Aim! Fire!"

The rifle ceased to waver before him : it covered the men, steadily. Tighter his trigger-finger pressed. Tighter ! A flash burned into the mist, and the keen powder-smoke swept past his face, and stung in his nostrils.

He flung his right hand to his cartridge-box, and fumbled at the catch. The empty shell clattered on the stones as he shoved the fresh cartridge home and snapped the breech-block to place.

Out in the clearing the centre man of the three staggered, wavered from side to side, threw out his arms blindly, and fell forward heavily.

What was it ? What was the matter with him, the sentry wondered. Why had they all stopped ? His face was wet, and he felt for his handkerchief mechanically. Then he remembered that he had dropped it ; and, as though nothing else mattered but its recovery, he stooped, groping, and picked it up.

When he rose he looked for the men. They were gone. No one was in the clearing. He looked this way and that, and thought of going forward to search, but hesitated, bewildered. He could not think, could not remember. Had he seen the three, and had he shot one ? Or was it all a dream ? What made the man fall down ? Had he shot a man ? He wondered if it had hurt the man much. Was he a murderer ? Or had he done his duty ?

From down the ravine came the sound of steps coming quickly ; and out of the darkness of the bushes came an officer and a squad of men, at the double.

The sentry did not seem to notice or to hear them : he stood staring ahead, his rifle in his hands, ready for another shot. At the sharp word of the officer he turned, startled, and half raised his piece as though to fire, but dropped it as the officer spoke again, and once more stared out into the mist. The officer spoke, and the sentry answered with a mechanical salute.

"I shot a man," he said.

The officer looked around : no one was in sight. Where was the man ? he demanded.

"Out there. I shot him."

He had been dreaming, the officer declared. There was no man. Had he seen anything ? What had happened ? the officer asked, sternly.

"There were three men. They would not halt. I shot one. He fell on his face. Then they were not here."

The officer and the men looked at him in amazement ; he seemed to be only half conscious of their presence. Suddenly he started forward, clambering up the bank, and moving out into the clearing. The others followed.

The sentry halted midway of the clear space.

"Here was where he fell down. I shot him ; and he fell on his face just here."

He stooped and felt in the grass. Then he straightened up, and, without looking at it himself, flung out his hand toward the officer.

It was dark with blood.

H. H. Bennett.

THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN PROPHETS.

UTAH'S entrance to Statehood again puts in evidence before the country at large that picturesque and ever puzzling people, the Mormons. Their "flight into the wilderness" after the memorable expulsion from Ohio and Illinois and Missouri, the founding of Deseret, the government's warfare against polygamy and final suppression of plural marriages,—these are distinct and familiar episodes in the history of "the Saints." Not less interesting to public observation is the passing of this singular community from Territorial restrictions to the new liberties and privileges of a State. This advancement of a people so unique offers an alluring study to any one who is even remotely interested in the development of the Great West. Approach the Mormons from any point of view, and you have abundant matter for investigation. The romance of their history is not exceeded by the story of the Indians. Their endurance, development, dispersion, reunion, and prosperity have scarce a parallel save in the spectacle of the Jews, incomplete and relative as the comparison may be. As a religious, social, and industrial body their points of contact with other communities are few. This by no means precludes the presence in Utah of numerous "Gentiles" whose relations with the elect are unopposed to the purposes of commerce. Yet the Mormons are dominant there, and will probably prevail in number and power indefinitely, especially if the converts made by missionaries equal in number the other immigrants. How will the Saints adjust themselves to the new conditions? Will their old attitude of distrust and suspicion of the government's official representatives undergo, in time, the complete modification essential to the truest patriotism? Will the sense of persecution be ultimately eliminated from their minds? Will they cease to teach their children that the United States once oppressed them and permitted them to be driven forth as wanderers in the desert? In short, will the bitter memories, strong prejudices, and latent antipathies of the present generation die out with the new? Are they to be an integral or extraneous part of an assimilating republic whose extraordinary digestive powers the refuse of many nations has not impaired?

These questions and others are uppermost just now; yet I fancy that tolerant persons whose scrutiny of the Mormons has not been wholly confined to printed accounts or mouth-to-mouth fables fear no evil results from Utah's Statehood. Though "revelations" have at various times countenanced and discountenanced polygamy, there is now less likelihood of a return to its practice than in the days of Joseph Smith's predicament.

Dismissing this danger as improbable, one finds so much to admire in the industrial accomplishments of the Mormons, so much to praise in their economic system as contrasted with methods in vogue among many American farmers, so much to applaud in those principles of cohesion which fortify and advance community interests, that one is

tempted to dismiss the other questions too. Without preaching socialism, save as the Biblical mode of life may involve that doctrine, there is still much in the common practice of the Mormons which the socialist is as yet able to air only as a theory. Without the assistance of the money nowadays deemed the *sine qua non* of great industrial achievement, they have nevertheless erected in Utah an agricultural bulwark against which the onslaughts of panic have proved impotent. Without pretensions to much scientific knowledge, their reservoirs and dams are object-lessons to engineers from the East. Without endowment of any kind, the funds of their Church are so sustained by tithes, and the spirit of self-sacrifice is so abiding, that a comprehensive and diligent body of missionaries seeks recruits to the faith alike in Sweden and in Samoa. Alert and informed business-men in the country stretching from the Missouri River to the Pacific coast look upon the irrigation movement as the most potent factor in the further and immediate up-building of the West; and for vivid illustration of their arguments they point to Utah no less than to California and Colorado.

Yet, liberal as one may be in considering the Mormon as a citizen, you cannot escape the curious interest aroused by his religion. I select religion from all the expressions of his life because you cannot treat him intelligently apart from it. I doubt if there be any other class of people speaking the English language whose every action is so intimately bound up with its belief in spiritual things. The Bible, or the Book of Mormon, or the "Doctrine and Covenants," is at the bottom of all he does. In body he belongs to the nineteenth century; in spirit he holds close communion with the Israelites of old. No shrine or relic is needed to excite his devotion. He walks among miracles. Cures of the flesh are effected by prayer, and instantly; obstacles are removed, dangers averted, foes disarmed, material assistance rendered, through divine interposition. It is the faith that would move mountains and marvel not.

Some men find comfort in philosophy; misfortune fills others with a fierce pride that is their strength. But the children of Nephi seek analogy and example in the things which befell their ancestors in Egypt and in Arabia. The alkali-pools of the American desert are yet less bitter than the waters of Marah. When the gushing fountain slakes their thirst, no visible Moses, no actual rod, is needed to confirm the divine source of the relief. The buffaloes which satisfy a desperate hunger took no accidental trail in their passage over the plains: it was the Lord that put them in the path of the Saints.

Is this sincere, or bred of affectation? Ask some one who reads the hearts of men. I see only the signs that I see.

It is not of the Mormons in Utah alone that I speak now. You will find them dwelling on the plains and among the mountains of Arizona, New Mexico, Idaho, and elsewhere. But wherever found they are much the same,—all dreamers of dreams, prophets or followers of prophets, living among revelations and guided by them. It is this phase of Mormon character that I would especially illustrate. To me, at least, it seems more than anything else to lay bare the species of mental operation that accepts so unquestioningly the doctrines of Joseph

Smith. It explains the kind of imagination, the credulity and simplicity of conviction, the stubborn clinging to an entertained idea, that have led the Mormons unwavering through crises of contemporary occurrences, through arrays of current historical evidence, through testimony of apostates, that might well shake the faith of the blindest believer. Finally, it affords a clue to the ready acceptance of and persistent devotion to a religion whose externals are not inviting, whose exactions are rigorous, whose material rewards in connection with the industrial system which it orders are approached only through toil and self-denial.

You must bear in mind, moreover, that the Mormon, with all his primitive precepts of life, with all the demands of his moral code, is not an austere or gloomy person. It is true that even in a country where the pioneer keeps no calendar, where the names of days are lost in the monotony of their duties, the Mormon has not swerved from the mandate concerning Sunday. It is true also—whether poverty or precept be the controlling motive—that bread and milk are often his main sustenance; that tobacco is little used by the orthodox; that the Saints are no “riotous eaters of flesh;” that the sobriety for which the Mormon is noted arises from the advocacy of total abstinence. There even seems to be strong warrant for the Mormon’s boast of personal purity. This much admitted as approximate verity, I pass over his defects as irrelevant to the present purpose, and simply note that, with all the severity and soberness of his environment, the Mormon is not steeped in sadness. Take him as encountered in the farming communities,—since it is here that he is most typical,—and you will find him no enemy of rational amusement. I am not sure that his ideas of recreation are broad enough to admit of card-playing without stakes; but the village dance, opened and closed with prayer, is a frequent pastime, and hymns are not his only music.

The Mormon, in fact, is neither morose nor emotional. You can trace the process of the thought that chains him to the Church neither to gloom nor to ecstasy. Yet what should the contempt and execration of Gentiles, the sober statements of impartial historians, the contradictions of expounded doctrine,—what should these things weigh with one who hears voices from on high and all but sees the visible hand of the Lord stretched forth to save? With what patience may a chosen people bear the sneer that classifies the New Mexico population as “white men, Mexicans, Indians, and Mormons”? With what superior wisdom, what conscious rectitude, may they meet the Nauvoo women’s arraignment of a prophet who foretold the civil war, the Gentiles’ suspicions of a later seer whose promise of protection against savages was wonderfully made good! With what serene indifference may they overlook the Missourians’ gibes and charges of misdoing,—they who were divinely directed through myriad dangers, across trackless and inhospitable wastes, to the land of the honey-bee!

There is a pretty fable in the West—to me it is pure fiction—that when the exiled Mormons turned their faces towards the Pacific in that toilsome march to the Utah of to-day they scattered sunflower-seeds in their path. The purpose of it, so the story goes, was to make a trail

of blossoms that would some day guide their returning steps to the country whence they were expelled,—the country of the “New Jerusalem.” The sowing was fruitful, and the succeeding seasons’ yield of flowers brought fresh seed that the winds bore broadcast. That is one explanation of the sunflower’s profusion in the valleys and on the plains to the east and west of the Continental Divide. I doubt the readiness of the Mormons to accept this explanation, even though some authority be furnished. The genus *Helenium*—nay, even the *Rudbeckia* or the *Cistus*—is doubtless beautiful to look upon, especially when it shakes a million golden heads on some mountain-flat in the last hours of an August afternoon. A Bunthorne would probably swoon at the spectacle, or at least find an æsthetic rather than a practical warrant for the tale I have told. But the Mormons are not æsthetes, and as plain farmers they find the sunflower a great nuisance. It has a predilection for ploughed fields, and is not easily exterminated: so that the English tourist in his study of America from a car window might well be forgiven for his hasty impression that sunflower ranches were grateful tokens of light and sweetness in an otherwise barbarous and objectionable country. Finally, to stop this digression and show its relation to the thread of my theme, my own fancy does not carry me far enough to credit the fiction. I believe that the trust which the Mormons reposed in Heaven concerning both their own destiny and their destination was much too great to justify the precaution of sowing wild flowers. Their “flight” was in accord with prophetic announcement, and a prophecy of safe progress was enlisted to quiet the qualms of those who served under Uncle Sam in the march to the coast.

I have said that this spirit of prophecy and of heavenly help so pervaded the Mormon in thought and action that it was alike a key to his character and his sustaining faith. Let me enumerate some instances, and you will perhaps agree with me that the roll in the bowels of Ezekiel, the sins of Judah bewailed by Isaiah, scarce exceeded in their prompting the forces presumably at work in Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, and some of the contemporary Saints. Turn, for example, to the book of “Doctrine and Covenants,” which contains the latter-day revelations accepted as an unerring guide. Therein you will find that the Prophet Joseph Smith in 1832 foretold in no ambiguous terms the civil war between North and South. The Mormons point to the date and the prophecy, and ask if you are not convinced.

Here is the literal passage, “given through Joseph, the Seer:”

“1. Verily, thus saith the Lord, concerning the wars that will shortly come to pass, beginning at the rebellion of South Carolina, which will eventually terminate in the death and misery of many souls.

“2. The days will come that war will be poured out upon all nations, beginning at that place;

“3. For behold, the Southern States shall be divided against the Northern States, and the Southern States will call on other nations, even the nation of Great Britain, as it is called, and they shall also call upon other nations, in order to defend themselves against other nations; and thus war shall be poured out upon all nations,

"4. And it shall come to pass, after many days, slaves shall rise up against their masters, who shall be marshalled and disciplined for war."

Again, under "Important Items of Instruction, given by Joseph, the Prophet, April 2, 1843:"

"12. I prophesy, in the name of the Lord God, that the commencement of the difficulties which will cause much bloodshed previous to the coming of the Son of man will be in South Carolina.

"13. It may probably arise through the slave question. This a voice declared to me, while I was praying earnestly on the subject, December 25, 1832."

Not less extraordinary is the prophecy claimed to have been made by Brigham Young for the benefit of the Mormon Battalion. The episode of the battalion is familiar enough to those well acquainted with the history of the Mexican war. It is doubly familiar to those who have dipped into the strange history of the Mormons. But though to the Saints this incident of their career is a glory and an inspiration, a proof of valor and of loyalty, a refutation of evil charges which they delight to hurl in the teeth of slander, yet it gets scant notice, or no notice at all, in some valuable books of reference. Perhaps this is excuse enough for my more than passing mention of the march; but if a better one be wanted, it is at hand in the consideration I would ask for that crude and remarkable account entitled "*A Concise History of the Mormon Battalion in the Mexican War.*" The volume bears no imprint of the publisher, though the Congressional copyright of fifteen years ago appears; I do not find it in my catalogue of Salt Lake City publications; I am not prepared to say that the book is rare or unknown in Eastern libraries. Perhaps for purely historical purposes "*Cooke's Conquest*" would answer as well. But the author of this other volume is Sergeant Daniel Tyler, one of the Mormon non-commissioned officers of the battalion, who drew his facts and fancy for the work from personal recollection as well as from the diaries and letters of comrades; and I doubt if there may be found outside these pages a freer or more complete exposition of the Mormon mind. I confess the book fascinated me. The perils, the suffering, the almost incredible hardships, are interesting enough; but you may find these things in any account of how the West was conquered,—an account whose unadorned narrative so transcends many inventions of romance, is so stirring and so stimulating in its lessons of American manhood, that I fail to seize the idea of certain countrymen who tell us the United States is not old enough to have a history. This particular book is fascinating, then, not on account of the dangers it dwells upon, but through its revelation of the Mormon attitude. It is less a record of human courage and endurance than a list of supernatural occurrences. It teaches "history" that I—and doubtless many others—have not heard before. It more than confirms my own view of the Mormon's devout imagination. Above all, sincerity is stamped upon its awkward diction, its laborious grappling with complicated circumstances selected for narration,—even upon the secular "songs" composed by various bards of the battalion, one of whom finds no vexation to the ear in rhyming "wolves" with "bulls,"

"shelves," and "full," after which the rhymes for the refrain are altogether exhausted.

There is record in this volume of the Prophet Brigham's prediction. The battalion of five hundred and twenty men (reduced from the original call for one thousand) was recruited, it may be remembered, in July, 1846, at Council Bluffs, with the purpose of opening a wagon-road to the Pacific coast and assisting in the subjugation of the Californians. California had not yet submitted to the United States government, and ever since the outbreak of the war it had been President Polk's intention to send there a body of infantry. At the time of the mustering the Mormons were already on their way west in search of a new home beyond the Great Divide, and this circumstance, taken in connection with their reputed endurance and excellent organization, determined the President's selection. It is probably the truth, however, that the Mormons were ill prepared for such service. "The call could hardly have been more inconveniently timed," says one historian. "The young and those who could best have been spared were then away from the main body, either with pioneer companies in the van, or, their faith unannounced, seeking work and food about the northwestern settlements, to support them till the return of the season for commencing emigration. The force was therefore to be recruited from among the fathers of families, and others whose presence it was desirable to retain.

"There were some, too, who could not view the invitation without jealousy. They had twice been persuaded by (State) government authorities in Illinois and Missouri to give up their arms on some special appeals to their patriotic confidence, and had then been left to the malice of their enemies. And now they were asked, in the midst of an Indian country, to surrender over five hundred of their best men for a war march of thousands of miles to California, without the hope of return till after the conquest of that country. Could they view such a proposition with favor?"

Nevertheless, the battalion was recruited within a very few weeks after the call for volunteers was made; and six months later the majority of these soldiers—all who had not succumbed to sickness or whom death had not claimed by the way—entered San Diego. It was here that their Gentile commander, Lieutenant-Colonel P. St. George Cooke, of the United States Army, formulated an order which read in part, "History may be searched in vain for an equal march of infantry. Half of it has been through a wilderness where nothing but savages and wild beasts are found, or deserts where, for want of water, there is no living creature. . . . Thus, marching half naked and half fed, and living upon wild animals, we have discovered and made a road of great value to our country."

They had travelled from Council Bluffs to Fort Leavenworth, thence to Santa Fé, southward along the Rio Grande, westward to Tucson and the California coast,—a march of over two thousand miles.

It is important and interesting in this connection, and in connection with Mormon suspicion of the United States government noted at the outset of this article, to observe the feelings of the Saints towards the nation when they were thus summoned to arms. One need not search

far to learn the depth of their distrust. President George Q. Cannon of the Mormon Church writes, "The secret history of the transaction [the raising of the battalion] is, as President Young was afterwards informed on the best of authority, that Thomas H. Benton, United States Senator from the State of Missouri, got a pledge from President Polk that if the Mormons did not raise the battalion of five hundred he might have the privilege of raising volunteers in the upper counties of Missouri to fall upon them and use them up."

And in his "History of the Church" President Cannon, referring to the period immediately following the battalion's arrival in Salt Lake Valley, thus quotes Brigham Young in indirect oration: "The plan of raising a battalion to march to California by a call from the War Department was devised with a view to the total overthrow of the kingdom of God and the destruction of every man, woman, and child, and was hatched up by Senator Thomas H. Benton. The enemies of the Saints firmly believed they would refuse to respond to the call, and they told President Polk this would prove to him whether they were friends to the Union; and they further advised the President, when the call would be rejected, to say to the States of Missouri and Illinois and the mobocrats, 'The Mormons are at your mercy.' When Captain Allen, who had been appointed by the government to call upon the Latter-Day Saints to raise a battalion for the war, read his papers, the power of the Almighty was upon President Young and his brethren, and it overshadowed Allen, and he straightway became the friend of the people. . . . President Young further remarked that he saw the whole plan concocted as plainly as he saw the faces then before him, and he felt within himself that his faith in God would outgeneral the wickedness of their enemies. The battalion was formed, it started, and the sword fell on the other side. If the battalion had not gone they would not have been in the Valley then."

You will find much the same thing—including the address of Brigham Young—in the report of speeches made at the first general festival of the battalion, held in Salt Lake City February 6 and 7, 1855. President J. M. Grant (there are three presidents in the Mormon Church) recalled a visit made by him to the national capital, and emphasized Young's remarks, saying, "Yes, Mr. Thomas H. Benton wanted to take troops and pounce upon your wives and children when upon the banks of the Missouri River and sweep them out of existence. And when the case was argued, the question was asked, 'Supposing you cut off the men, what shall be done with the women and children?' 'Oh,' said Benton, 'if you argue the case and wish to know what shall be done with the women, I say wipe them off too.' 'Well, then,' was asked, 'what shall be done with the children?' 'Why,' said Benton, 'cut them off, men, women, and children, for the earth ought to drink their blood.' And the feeling was so strong upon the question that it came within a little of magnetizing the whole nation."

Does not all this seem to explain the Danites, and the massacre at Mountain Meadows two years later?

I quote Sergeant Tyler as my authority that "from the time the Saints first consented to leave Nauvoo in order to secure freedom from

persecution . . . it was confidently asserted by many persons in authority that the government would interfere to prevent them if they attempted to journey west of the Rocky Mountains. Governor Ford in writing to Sheriff Backenstos as early as December 29, 1845, expressed the belief that the government would prevent their removal, as they would be likely to 'join the British.'"

Elder Samuel Brannan, it seems, got a hint from Ex-Postmaster General Amos Kendall that the Mormons "were to be prevented upon the plea that it was contrary to law for an armed force from the United States to invade the dominion of another government." So Elder Little of New England, armed with letters of introduction to Vice-President Dallas, Hon. George Bancroft, the Secretary of the Navy, and other officials, visited Washington; and the upshot of his journey was the call for volunteers.

Such was the Mormon leaders' state of mind, and such were the obstacles both to complying with and disregarding the call. It was by way of encouragement to the battalion—for the Mormons are primarily men of peace—that Brigham Young made his prophecy concerning their mission. "He predicted," we are told, "that not one of those who might enlist would fall by the hands of the nation's foe; that their only fighting would be with wild beasts; that there would not be as many bullets whistle around their ears as did around Dr. Willard Richards' in Carthage jail."

The daring prediction, if it were really made, was fulfilled to the letter, and in consequence there was at least one prophet with honor in his own country. Perhaps some members of the battalion were further fortified by the saying credited to the Prophet Joseph, that when the Constitution shall be tottering the Mormons shall be the people to save it from the hand of the foe; by the revelation that they would be called upon for "a sacrifice equal to that of Abraham offering up Isaac." And had not the battalion "been offered, like Isaac, a living sacrifice for the Church as well as the nation"? And had it not proved, as the Mormon motto ran, "a ram in the thicket"?

It is curious to note the strange circumstances which now and again marked with "proof as strong as holy writ" the fulfilment of President Young's prophecy. Perhaps the numerical strength of the outfit is adequate explanation of its bloodless passage across the lands of wild Indians; so we need not dwell on the Apaches' wondrous amiability. It may be, even, that sceptics will attribute the Mormons' unresisted and peaceful march through Tucson to the ruse of war employed (the pretence that the battalion was only the advance guard of a great army), to the cowardice of the Mexicans, and to the friendly overtures of the battalion. Within the city walls was "the garrison of four Presidios of Sonora." The Mexicans were provided with artillery, and reinforcements from three other garrisons had been summoned. Yet we have the testimony of Colonel Cooke himself that the soldiers fled with their cannon, in company with the majority of the inhabitants. Therefore, "who shall say that the same God who sent terror into the camps of the enemies of ancient Israel did not have an eye over the little modern Israelitish force then crossing the great desert by His divine command

through the Prophet Brigham, who had said, 'There will be no fighting, except with wild beasts?'

But this heavenly guardianship of the battalion did not cease, we are told, with its safe arrival at San Diego. It is Tyler's conviction that the presence of the battalion on the coast in 1847 was a means of averting civil war. The dispute between Kearny and Fremont concerning the governorship of California was rife. Under the erroneous impression that California was conquered, Kearny had pushed ahead from Santa Fé with an escort of only one hundred men. After the fighting at San Pascual and Los Angeles in December, 1846, and January, 1847, in which the United States dragoons defeated the Californians, the Mexican forces capitulated to Fremont and entered into a treaty with him as "military commandant." Although the governorship dispute was appealed to Washington, the articles of capitulation were ratified by Kearny and Commodore Stockton, and put a stop to hostilities on the coast before the final treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was made. Meanwhile the Mormons, under the terms of their enlistment, had been attached to Kearny's command. Hence, "had not the matter been appealed to Washington, doubtless the Californians would have taken advantage of the situation to again take possession of the country. Thus the hand of God was again visible in preventing the shedding of blood. The many hairbreadth escapes of the battalion from death and the shedding of blood are living miracles."

Here is evidence of another sort, and more direct. In 1848 a little company of Mormons who had served with the battalion were employed by Elder Samuel Brannan to carry private mail from San Francisco to Council Bluffs and certain intermediate points. Some time after leaving Salt Lake on their eastward journey, their horses were stolen by Pawnee Indians. The thieves were pursued and the horses recovered, but not without a fight. "William Hawk, one of the pursuing party, was miraculously saved by the guns of the Indians failing to go off when several aimed at him while only a few feet distant and attempted to fire."

Instances abound of answers to prayer, of dreams that came true, of occurrences that seem supernatural from the Mormon point of view. Remember, it is not the testimony of but one man. Let me briefly mention some of the most striking. Near Bloomington a terrific gale in the night, accompanied by lightning, sends the trees crashing about the camp. Yet not a tree falls among the men; and of their precious ox-teams in a neighboring field but one ox is killed, though the deadened timber has fallen thick about them. Sanford Porter is taken sick and falls behind the command. He suffers so that death seems certain. "But while alone he summoned all his faith and called upon the Lord in fervent prayer, asking that his life might be spared if there was any further work for him to do. In an instant all pain left him, and he was as vigorous and healthful as he had ever been in his life." In November, when west of Santa Fé, it is decided that a detachment of fifty-five sick men be sent back to Pueblo for the winter. For this journey of nearly three hundred miles they are supplied with one government wagon, four yoke of poor cattle, five days' rations (short rations for twenty-six days had been allowed and overlooked), and two dressed

sheep as food for the sick. An ox is mired in the mud, and dies; the team is now too weak for even the scant load. The outfit is in desperate plight. But, lo, the next morning a pair of "splendid young steers" is found with the other oxen. A week out from the Rio Grande the guides, who have been in advance, dolefully declare their doubt of finding water short of the Gila,—a hundred miles distant. To go back is starvation; to go forward is probable death by thirst. To turn south-west through the Mexican settlements means to penetrate an enemy's country; yet this is what Colonel Cooke decides to do. The battalion is downcast; it is on the coast that they expect to rejoin their families. But "Father" Pettegrew and Brother Hancock go from tent to tent with whispered advice to "pray to the Lord to change the colonel's mind." Some go apart secretly to offer up their petitions, and "that night over three hundred fervent prayers ascended to the throne of grace for that one favor." Do you doubt the result? A southerly course is taken the next day; but only two miles are travelled when—*mirabile dictu*—the colonel rises in his saddle, calls a halt, and says, "I was ordered to California, and I will go there or die in the attempt. Bugler, blow the right!"

Is the record monotonous? I, at least, do not find it so, and am tempted to cite some other instances. John Barrowman is found asleep while on guard, and is court-martialled. The sentence imposed by the court is so lenient that the colonel, disgusted at the trivial penalty and having no power to increase it, remits the punishment altogether. Would any one but a Mormon perceive in this decision—as does the culprit—"a specific and direct answer to prayer"? It is easier to understand the belief in supernatural intervention when we consider the Mormons' crossing of the Loup Fork in midwinter. Floating ice bars their passage, so they camp on the bank. But as the Red Sea opened to the hosts of Israel, so the river freezes on the fifth night; and scarcely has the last wagon gained the farther shore when the congealed water bridge is broken and the stream is impassable again.

There are other marvels; but I pass them by: Tyler's distinct dream of Salt Lake Valley long before his arrival there; his fulfilled prediction concerning obstacles removed; his draught of health and strength from the waters of the creek, in accordance with the vision; likewise the Mexican gold piece which falls from the air between his feet in time of need; and the circumstance that it was Mormons who first found precious metal in California, in Sutter's mill-race, near the site of Sacramento City, in January, 1848.

Whether the Mormons have entirely overcome their prejudice against "mineral medicine," I cannot say. I do know that in at least one isolated community outside Utah the support of several prolific wives and their children, together with tithe-paying and the desert's disadvantages, have reduced them to such poverty that they sometimes die without medical attendance. In the march to California there was bitter complaint of the Gentile army doctor's arsenic and calomel. Long before the end of the journey the calomel gave out, it is averred, and nothing but arsenic was administered. The charge does not seem unreasonable to me when I myself remember that a distinguished army

physician stationed in a prominent Eastern city some twenty years ago was generally credited with giving his patients nothing but quinine and morphine. Be this as it may, the Mormons preferred the faith cure. In 1846 Brigham Young had instructed them, "If you are sick, live by faith, and let surgeons' medicine alone if you want to live, using only such herbs and mild foods as are at your disposal. If you give heed to this counsel you will prosper; but if not, we cannot be responsible for the consequences. A hint to the wise is sufficient."

During the battalion's march this advice is religiously complied with as far as possible. Henry G. Boyle, who is taken dangerously sick through drinking too much water when overheated, throws his dose of calomel in the camp-fire, but recovers before night, thanks to the laying on of hands and his anointing with oil by the Elders. Henry Hoyt, on his way from Salt Lake to California, is less fortunate. There is no physician or poisonous drug with this little band of Mormons, but Hoyt, who "had several times been taken from his horse in sinking spells, and received strength through the ordinance of laying on of hands," succumbs at last. Other members of the battalion take the surgeon's medicine under coercion. One fever patient, treated willy nilly, disobeys the doctor's express command by drinking "an incredible amount of water," which "under divine providence was the cause of preserving his life instead of taking it away." On the other hand, Alva Phelps dies a few hours after medicine is thrust down his throat with the aid of oaths and a rusty spoon; and the opinion is expressed that, considering the threats made to the obstinate, it is a case of "premeditated murder" on the doctor's part. David Smith's death is laid at the same door. With such horror do the Mormons look upon this medicine, that one sick man, during a day of snow and cold rain, conceals his condition by hiding in the tall grass until the command goes by, and then painfully making his way to camp.

So much for the battalion. Let me touch upon a circumstance unconnected with it, to which occasional reference is made even now. You will find a full account of it in a discourse delivered before the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, March 26, 1850, by Mr. Thomas L. Kane,—the Kane who eight years afterwards was peace-maker between the rebellious Mormons under Brigham Young and Governor Cumming representing the United States government. The occurrence is mentioned as one of the only two events that have menaced seriously the establishment at Deseret. Of these the second was the California gold fever, from whose disorganizing influence the Mormons were rescued by their leaders' "half-ironic instruction" beginning, "The true use of gold is for paving streets, covering houses, and making culinary dishes." But words of wisdom could not avert the menace of 1848, when "desolating myriads" of the Deseret cricket descended upon the crops, mowing them and leaving the ground "as if touched with an acid or burnt by fire." It was then that great flocks of gulls, hitherto unheard of in the valley, "hastened across the lake from some unknown quarter, and gorged themselves upon the well-fatted enemy. They were snow-white, with . . . long wings that arched in flight 'like an angel's.'" That season and the next they exterminated the crickets. "The history of

the Mormons," wrote Mr. Kane in 1850, "has ever since been the unbroken record of the most wonderful prosperity. They may be pardoned for deeming it miraculous."

This is not all. I am told the Mormons find a likeness between the natural features of the Holy Land and of their own Utah,—a likeness not confined to the appearance of "the salt sea of Palestine in the plain below." Indeed, it is not necessary to take one's imagination in both hands in order to observe the resemblance; even the unbeliever's fancy, once led in this direction, discovers for him the analogy in desert and mountain. And is not the irrigation of reclaimed Utah as old as the Pharaohs' canals, and has it not made a garden of the Oman plains where Lehi turned his steps in the reign of King Zedekiah?

There are Mormon prophecies up to date. While in the Southwest in the summer of 1894, and meditating an early trip to New York, I was seriously advised by an intelligent Mormon woman to postpone my journey. It seems that some recent prediction of a "Gentile" weather prophet, foretelling the speedy destruction of Manhattan Island, had revived the recollection of President Woodruff's prophecy many years ago. Mr. Woodruff is to-day perhaps the most conspicuous of the three Presidents at Salt Lake City. His life has been an eventful one, even excluding the excitement which must, at various times, have attended "the breaking of every bone in his body except his backbone." It was at Sunset, Colorado, when he was one of the Apostles, that Mr. Woodruff preached the sermon of which his prophecy was a part. I have it from a Mormon who was present on the occasion (the date is rather vaguely fixed at something less than nineteen years ago) that the augury involved Gotham's submersion by a tidal wave at a time that, according to my informant's memory, would correspond to the summer of 1894.

When I ventured to inquire of my counsellor whether the Mormon faith in their prophecies and their Presidents would be impaired in the event that this special prediction should prove false, the answer was simply, "Oh, it can't help coming true. All the Mormon prophecies turn out just as it was told."

I knew she was thinking of Smith and Young, so I said nothing, but afterwards pursued my inquiries in other quarters. A leading and educated member of the community, a prosperous and shrewd businessman, said that the thing foretold by President Woodruff might or might not come to pass. He was of the opinion that this particular prophetic utterance had not been accepted by the Church as official. And he explained the ecclesiastical process to which prophecies must be submitted before actually sanctioned as such, implying that a prediction met with much the same challenge as a dead Catholic recommended for canonization encounters at the hands of the *advocatus diaboli*. I did not tell him that my own mind perceived some relation between the time of the prophecy's acceptance by the Church and the date of the actual occurrence.

Time and the hour would seem to indicate that the devil's advocate had won his case.

William Trowbridge Larned.

EUROPE AND THE EXPOSITION OF 1900.

IN three articles published elsewhere * I have pointed out in a general way the advantages, political, commercial, and social, of International Exhibitions; described the chief features of the coming Paris World's Fair; given a *résumé* of the action of our Congress in undertakings of this kind; pointed out our shortcomings, both official and private, and urged a more prompt and generous policy at Washington.

The present article is confined to a rapid glance at what the leading nations of Europe have been doing during the past year or two in the matter of their participation in the Exhibition of 1900, in the hope that a report of their activity and liberality may tend to awaken American public opinion and Federal legislators to a realization of their own supineness; for, though the French invitation to Paris in 1900 reached our State Department, as it did European governments, at the beginning of the autumn of 1895, and though Secretary Olney promptly transmitted it to Congress, it has not yet been taken up. How, in the mean time, have the European nations acted? This article is an answer to that question. I have gone to considerable trouble to obtain first-hand and official information on this point, and I give below the gist of the facts that bear more directly on the different aspects of the subject.

That Belgium, which is so closely united to France historically, geographically, linguistically, and commercially, should have taken a quick—I believe she was one of the very first nations, if not the first, to accept the invitation—and large interest in the Exhibition of 1900 is not surprising. In October, 1895, less than two months after the invitation had been sent out, Belgium informed the French government of its intended participation, and, without waiting for the voting of a credit, Senator Verenysse-Bracq, who was the Belgian Commissioner-General to Chicago in 1893, was delegated to attend to the preliminary arrangements of the Belgian section, and has been for many months in direct communication with M. Alfred Picard, the French Director-General.

"The Belgian section," writes Baron de Fallon, Secretary of the Belgian Legation at Paris, "will be very important, as has been the case at former Paris Exhibitions, for in Belgium a World's Fair is looked upon, in a general way, as a benefit to commerce and industry, especially when it is held at Paris, because of the extensive business relations between the two countries. France being one of our principal markets, our manufacturers and merchants will see to it that they be well represented at Paris, and the government will do all in its power

* "The International Exhibition of 1900," *Century Magazine*, December, 1895; "The United States and the Paris Exhibition," *North American Review*, December, 1895; "Advantages of International Exhibitions," *Lippincott's*, September, 1896.

to aid them." Our Minister at Brussels, the Hon. James S. Ewing, seems to take much the same view as the Paris diplomatist, for he says in a recent letter, "From all that I am able to learn here, the Belgian exhibit is to be a success, and the business world is generally taking interest in the undertaking." M. Charles Pecher, one of the high officials of the coming Brussels Exhibition, confirms these two opinions, and exclaims enthusiastically, "The Belgian section at Paris is sure to be a brilliant one."

Inquiries among Belgian merchants and manufacturers reveal, however, some hesitations and difficulties that are worth noting. Thus M. Joseph Chardon, the Brussels iron and steel importer, says, "Though our Belgian industries were largely represented at former Paris Exhibitions, I do not think that such will be the case in 1900, owing to the Méline prohibition tariff, which has been in operation for the past two years. On account of this tariff the exportation to France of a great many Belgian manufactures has been quite impossible, and many manufacturers have been forced to erect works on the other side of the frontier."

Many of the same reasons which influence Belgium in taking a large part in a Paris Exhibition act in a similar way on Switzerland. It is no surprise, therefore, to learn that the Helvetic Republic accepted the French invitation nearly a year ago, and the words of the President of the Confederation in his message to the Federal Assembly reveal the friendly spirit for France which exists there. "Besides obtaining the views of the cantonal governments," he says, "we have done the same with the Swiss Commercial and Industrial Society, the *Gewerbeverein*, the Swiss Agricultural Society, etc., and the substance of the replies received shows that Switzerland cannot hold aloof from this enterprise, though all agree that we have been rather surfeited with too frequent Exhibitions. Most of the cantonal governments assume a very cold attitude; the practical advantage of an Exhibition is generally doubted; but, on the other hand, participation is considered desirable, chiefly for motives of a general nature. No canton has formally opposed it, and one may safely say that there will be a satisfactory exhibit in the department of fine arts, in the silk and mechanical industries, in watches, in agriculture, jewelry, wood-carving, etc. It may be said, on the whole, that Swiss public opinion is ready to make the sacrifices necessary for our country to be worthily represented at Paris in 1900, and if one may judge from the replies already received, it may be concluded that, so far as space is concerned, Swiss participation will probably be larger this time than last, perhaps double what it was. In 1889 our total expenses were six hundred thousand francs."

One of the United States officials in Switzerland writes me as follows, confirming much of what the President says: "The Swiss exhibit will be the best this country has ever made, but not so good as might be made, as so many recent Expositions have wearied the merchants. That is to say, the exhibit will be made under protest, as it were. It is felt here that Expositions do not result in much practical benefit, but must be participated in in order to maintain the national dignity."

Consequently, a preliminary credit of fifty thousand francs was opened by the Swiss government, so that the Commissioner-General and his secretary could immediately look to the interests of Switzerland at Paris.

Turning to Russia, France's recent ally, similar promptitude is found. The invitation has been accepted, and a commission is to be formed consisting of the heads of all the different ministerial departments, with the director of the Department of Trade and Manufacture as its president. Mr. John Karel, the United States Consul-General at St. Petersburg, writes, "The Commission will be ready in the fall of 1897, and the representation will be on a large scale. Though no appropriation has yet been made, Russia expects to lead all other nations in the extent of her participation. Great interest seems to be felt here in the undertaking, and the Russian people believe and say that the Exposition will be a success. They hold, further, that all such fairs promote industrial interests, and that every nation derives some benefit from them in new ideas, etc."

I understand that Russia is also to take part in the coming Scandinavian Exhibition at Stockholm, where will be brought together much that will probably be sent on later to Paris. Though at this writing the Swedish-Norwegian government has not yet voted a credit or appointed a commission, I am assured by a member of the Paris Legation of Sweden and Norway that there is every probability that action of this kind will soon be taken, especially as the government has already asked of the leading commercial bodies of the dual kingdom their opinions concerning the Exhibition.

The cause of the relative tardiness of Sweden and Norway is thus set forth by the United States Consul at Christiania, Mr. Gerhard Gade: "The attention and interest of all manufacturers in this as in all Scandinavian countries are now fully occupied with the Stockholm enterprise, which promises to be very large and splendid. Until it is ended, nobody here will give a thought to the Paris Exhibition of 1900."

Warmly attached to France, notwithstanding recent events, is Greece, which, in spite of her excessive poverty, has acted promptly. Last year the Greek government informed France that her participation could be counted upon, and, though no credit has been voted or commissioner appointed, a provisional delegate in Paris has been designated and has already entered into relations with the Exhibition authorities. "The Greeks act quickly at the last moment, but are slow to start out," remarks the Hon. Eben Alexander, United States Minister at Athens.

The other small nations of Eastern Europe have also sent in their adhesion. Thus, Roumania has not only accepted the invitation, but has placed at the head of a special commission charged with preparing the Roumanian exhibit Mr. Jean Kalindero, Director of the Royal Customs. An appropriation will be obtained as soon as this commission makes its report. The Paris Vice Consul-General of Roumania thinks that this appropriation will be large, though it may not surpass a million francs. "As Roumania is especially an agricultural country," he writes, "it is probable that the place of honor in the country's

exhibit will be given to this branch. But it is certain that industrial Roumania will also cut a figure in our section, though in an inferior measure because of its relatively small development."

The Servian government has likewise accepted, and has named its Consul-General at Paris Commissioner-General for the Exhibition. He has already entered into official relations with M. Picard.

Consul-General Luther Short informs me from Constantinople that Turkey has as yet done nothing in the direction of her participation at the Exhibition, the only European nation,—if Turkey may be called a European nation,—unless it be Portugal, that has not acted. So we in the United States stand side by side with Turkey in our dilatoriness.

Austria-Hungary signified its acceptance in August, 1896, and both countries have voted money and appointed commissioners-general, who have entered into communication with M. Picard. The first country has appropriated one million two hundred thousand florins for the Exhibition. The Paris chargé-d'affaires of Austria-Hungary writes me, "It is believed that our exhibit will be quite important. The industries, and especially industrial art, will probably predominate in the Austrian section, while in the Hungarian section agriculture will lead. The exhibits of Bosnia and Herzegovina—provinces administered by the Minister of Finance of the dual monarchy—will form a section by themselves. Though the French invitation was favorably received, the enthusiasm for Exhibitions in general cannot be said to be very strong in Austria-Hungary."

In November of last year a royal decree was published in Spain creating a general commission, with the Duke of Sexto at its head, charged with organizing the Spanish exhibit. The United States Consul-General for Spain, Mr. Hubert W. Bowen, writing me from Barcelona, says, "Spain has always taken a decided interest in Paris Expositions, and in 1900 she will doubtless have a very creditable section. This city, which is the commercial centre of Spain, is particularly alive to the benefits derived from international exhibitions, and will encourage by her example all the other cities of Spain to make an extraordinary effort to give an adequate idea to the world of the great progress that has been made in Spanish industries during the last quarter of a century."

The Italian government accepted the invitation at the end of June, 1896, and, though no credit has been voted nor commission named, the Italian Ambassador in Paris has been directed to put himself in communication with M. Picard, so that all the preliminary work leading up to Italy's participation is already under way.

It was last summer that the British government informed France of its intended official participation. A royal commission is to be appointed, and a special commission to work under its orders. In the mean time Mr. H. Austin Lee, First Secretary of the British Embassy at Paris and Commercial Attaché, has been designated as Provisional Commissioner to discuss the preliminary details with the French Commissioner-General. "Opinions are very much divided in England," a high official tells me, "as to the advantages of Exhibitions, and in

official circles there is a strong feeling against them." Nevertheless seventy-five thousand pounds has been allowed by the Treasury for the British section.

In February of the present year the Commissioner-General for Holland—a member of the Second Chamber of the States-General—was appointed and made chairman of a very distinguished and efficient central committee whose object is to promote the participation of Dutch exhibitors. The invitation had already been accepted—in December of last year—and a credit of about one hundred and thirty thousand dollars carried through. The principal industrial associations of the country had advocated strongly the appointment of this commission and the voting of a large appropriation.

Denmark, also, in December, 1896, sent a favorable answer to the French request, and a month or two later a Commissioner-General was named. But no money had been voted at the time of the writing of this article, though this is sure to be done in due season.

Though I have left to the last mention of the German Empire, it must not be thought that she is indifferent to the Exposition of 1900. Far from this. A well-known Paris official writes me, "While it does not appear likely that any foreign governments will take an active part in arranging their sections for at least another year, an exception must be made in the case of the Germans, whose commissioners are stated to be working actively in Germany with a view to making their section a very brilliant one." A German government architect spent the past winter in Paris. When it is remembered that Germany has not exhibited at either of the Paris Exhibitions since the war of 1870, and what great and successful efforts were made to place the Empire at the head of the foreign sections at Chicago in 1893, it is fair to conclude that the Fatherland does not intend to stand second to any other nation, with the exception of course of France, on the banks of the Seine in 1900.

It has thus been seen by this rapid glance over Europe that for many months, and in one or two cases for over a year and a half, the countries of the Old World have, almost without exception, taken action on this question of the part they mean to play at the International Exhibition which closes the century. In most instances large appropriations have been voted, committees appointed, and commissioners named. In a few others the invitation has been accepted and a temporary delegate in Paris designated with the mission to put himself in direct communication with the Exhibition authorities.

In a general way prompt and early action on the part of foreign governments is always advisable in the matter of International Exhibitions. But it is especially necessary in this instance, for in 1900 the demands for space must be made separately for each group, whereas in almost all of the preceding Exhibitions a nation could retain a single plot of space for its whole exhibit.

European countries and several in South America and Asia are already engaged in selecting their allotments. If we of the United States let many more months slip by without taking any action, our would-be exhibitors of the eleventh hour will not only find all the

"best places" given away, but will be chagrined to learn, as has been our experience at more than one former Exhibition, that they cannot find even "standing room." What a cry will then go up—the old cry that was heard in 1867, 1878, and 1889—against the future United States Commission! whereas the blame should be laid at the door of Congress and American public opinion, which are slumbering over this question of our participation at Paris in 1900, while all Europe and most of the rest of the civilized world are up and doing.

Theodore Stanton.

A FIDDLE IN THE DESERT.

MY heart sank with the sun. For I was a tenderfoot, and had never slept on the open plain alone, far from white settlements, not far enough from red ones. Have you ever done it, reader? I guess you haven't. Well, it's the nearest thing to floating on a spar in the middle of the Atlantic that you can imagine. It was just over-confidence that put me in that plight.

Lieutenant Hathorne, quartered with his company at Fort Caswell, Wyoming, was a school-mate of mine, and I had been out there enjoying myself in his company, although I had not ventured from the fort very often, having no taste for hunting and little for adventure. In fact, I had gone to the West for air and loafing, and had had a good ten days of both, as well as some scenery. It was with a heavy feeling that I took leave of the gallant fellows on a bright September morning,—a feeling caused in part by the approaching end of my vacation, but vaguely due to an uncertainty as to how and when I should get to Bitter Root barracks, thirty-five miles to the southward, where I was to take the stage for Laramie.

Hathorne had done what he could for me. "I've fixed it with the old man" (the colonel) "to send one party out this morning instead of waiting till after dinner," he said. Yet there was a queer hesitancy in his way of saying it.

"What party?" I asked.

"Why, the fellows who are going after the deserters: Sergeant Rollins's party. The old man has an idea that too many fellows have been taking French leave, and he wants to make an example."

"Oh!" I said; for I had known nothing about it.

"Why, you remember those two fellows that skipped last night. They had no mounts, and they can't get far. Between you and me, I hope the scamps won't be found. They weren't very good soldiers,—one of them especially. However, that's neither here nor there. Rollins and three men will take the trail after breakfast, and we'll put you on one of our plugs to go along. You can keep with them for twenty miles; then you can find your way to the barracks from the creek. I may take a second party later and go up by Dutchman's Butte,—but not if I can dodge the job. Take a cigar."

I took the cigar,—it was drawn from a case that a squaw had

embroidered, over on the reservation,—and remarked that this was luck.

"They'll take care of the nag at the barracks and return him to us."

"But I can walk from where I leave the party."

"You can beat your grandmother at poker." This irrelevant observation having been offered in a tone of incredulity that was almost contemptuous, Hathorne pulled me in to breakfast and held me up to the ridicule of his pretty young wife and his handsome, taciturn sister as a fellow who proposed to teach locomotor economics to the natives.

Everybody liked Hathorne's wife, who was frank and jolly. I don't think his sister was so much admired. She was reserved, moody, often sad, and seemed at times to be brooding darkly on trouble, though she could be amiable enough when she cared to be. Frank was a little that way himself; was inclined to be distant; talked too much about his family; was chilly toward his men; yet he had an emotional streak in him, and was a capital fellow at heart. I had seen a suspicion of tears in his eyes when the band played. Perhaps his West Point training intensified his exclusive tendencies, as it has done in some other cases. He was yet young and conscious of his buttons.

The morning meal was despatched in a business-like fashion, and I had not completed my adieus when Rollins and his party came to the door, clanging and jingling, with a led horse behind them. There was no wagon. A mail-rider had taken my valise to Laramie.

"Good-by, old man. Look us up again, and remember me to the boys out East." And Hathorne clutched my hand in one of his painful grips. Almost before I knew it, the cavalcade was in motion, and I was waving my farewells as our little party trotted down the slope before the fort.

"You seem to be pretty well loaded," I said to the sergeant, as we struck the level and broke into a lope.

"We can stay out three days, sir, or a week if we keep near water and find game. But likely we'll bring up with Heffernan and Grimsby by night. It's funny, but most of them take the same course,—down to Yellow Mary's Creek, where we'll leave you, sir; then, instead of laying the straight way for Laramie, they go round by Dutchman's Butte, to avoid Bitter Root barracks, I suppose. The trail to the Butte forks half a mile after you leave the creek, and goes to the right. You keep straight on."

I thanked the sergeant, and enjoyed his company until a little after noon, when we lunched at the creek and I gave up the horse, to his astonishment, for it had never occurred even to him, an infantryman, to get over a reach of ground except on a mount. You know it seldom does occur to the average man in town to use his own feet where there are horse- and trolley-cars and elevated railroads, and the usual countryman will not walk a mile to the post-office in twenty minutes if in half an hour he can catch his horse and hitch up. To tell the truth, I was a green, poor rider.

"But we don't want the horse, sir, and you're never going to do it afoot?" he exclaimed, with fallen jaw.

"Young man," I answered, a trifle piqued, "I walk from choice.

I enjoy it. I've tramped through hundreds of miles of New England, and have done thirty miles a day, easy enough."

"Yes, sir, but that isn't this country. You won't find any taverns between here and the barracks."

"Then it'll cost nothing for oats on this jaunt."

"And there's never a drop of water, the whole distance."

"What would you give me for my thirst when I reach the barracks?"

Rollins grinned. "A month's pay, if there was something better than water at the end of the trip."

I shared my tobacco with "the boys" and watched them pick up their traps and ride off. I had no misgiving when I struck the trail. On the contrary, it was exhilarating to be out here in the great vacancy, alone with the sun, the wind, and the sage-brush. There was a revolver in my pocket, and a staff in my hand. Both were for company.

As the sun swung to the westward in that clear sky it worked a magic in color. The best of landscape is in a low sun and with afternoon rather than morning light, because during the day the mists burn out of the air and you get then a wider distance and a sharper accent of form. Out here the blues warm into purples, the buttes burn into crimson, the sage loses its grizzly snarls in clouds of olive, and the sky itself shows subtle changes in its deeps of blue. That turquoise belt on the horizon—if you want to realize how clear it is, how different from the sapphire of the zenith, put the top of your head on the ground, as I have known artists to do (look out for cactus before you do it), and reverse the view: then you'll get a surprise. And what joy of color in these cactus blooms, lemon and rose, and how the prairie-dog mounds shine in the gold! Perhaps I should have been an artist, for I love color, though in that case I ought to have been born an old master, because grays and neutrals seem to be the proper thing at the exhibitions now. Yet what artist could keep this joy out of his eye?—joy in this vastness of olive and brown, those glowing turrets of shale away out yonder, that river of blue shadow marking an arroyo, that quiver of mirage in the east, that—Hello! What the dev— The trail had gone!

It isn't so hard to lose it as you may think, for the sage grows in such isolated tufts that every space between the bushes may pass for it unless it is kept warm with use. Humph! It was smart in me. I tramped back a bit, then went a little to the right, then climbed a swell of ground and looked about, but never a thing in the way of a trail could I see. And I never realized how much sage-brush was growing in the United States until then, nor how infernally alike it all was: a ghost of vegetation, a mockery, a harbor of snakes. Then it was that I called myself an ass, and illogically desired a horse.

There was no time to lose in hunting for that trail. I had a general idea of the way to go; Bitter Root barracks could not be more than ten miles away, and nearly south, whereas the fort was twenty-five miles behind me, and as hard to find as the barracks. The air was dry and elastic; there was heart in it: I would breathe it and go on. A little warm, though, and one perspired in the sun. What did the sergeant mention a drink for? I shouldn't have been thirsty, only for that. Now that I began to think of it, I *was* thirsty. Never mind. Three

hours more would find me among hospitable people, and then it would be cold beer instead of warm alkaline water.

Presently the ground began to pile up roughly in front,—a long, dry, shaly ridge, broken, splintered, trying to leather, and once or twice so steep that I had to go on hands and knees. Even the sage had given out now, and twice the buzz of rattlesnakes sounded near, but I pelted the creatures dead with chunks of stone, for the start they gave me. At last I reached the top of the butte, and found its farther side precipitous and about seven hundred feet above an open cañon. A jog of rock on the opposite crest of the valley hid the spot on the plain beyond where I fancied the barracks to be, but I would have sworn that not far away a faint smoke was staining the otherwise perfect blue of the heavens,—the blessed bake-shop of the cantonment.

Heigh-ho! There was nothing for it but to find a drainage hollow, or a land-slide scar, and get to the bottom of the cañon. This proved to be a matter of little trouble. Now, this great ditch was dry, and, like many others in the desert, it held tumbled heaps of rock,—rocks of yellow and red, for the larger part,—and these things were, in a vague way, so like the brick and stone of a town, and had such a sense of motion and purpose in the multitude of them, that I gave way to a momentary fancy about there being a lot of people here. I whooped with the full of my lungs, and almost scared myself, for the echo came back from the precipice with such a long and lonesome sound that the place was not really desolate until then. There were troops and hunters in this country, but if he got off from the trail one might travel for days without meeting them, and if he had no supplies nor way to get them he might as well be in the Sahara. I suppose I could eat raw prairie-dog, on a pinch.

Up the south wall of the hollow, then on again, but ever the heaving plain, yellow and brown and gray, with a little more confusion of stone and never the sign of life. The day was nearly spent. I toiled to the top of another butte and looked through the clear, purpling air in all directions, but in vain, and I came down again and lost myself in the vastness. My heart sank with the sun.

Tired and worried,—for worry wears a fellow more than work,—I dropped on the earth, propped my chin in my hands, and brought myself to face some disagreeable facts. Bears? No, I hardly thought there were any on this side of the mountains. Wolves? They were cowardly, except in packs. Indians? H'm! there had been talk of a rising, though it was a long fifty miles away, and would they care to come so near to the forts, anyhow? But hunger, thirst, fatigue, the madness that comes to people imprisoned alone in space,—they were threatening.

Out of the emptiness came a low boom. "By George! the sun-set gun at the barracks!" I exclaimed, and I sprang to my feet, looking eagerly in all directions for a wisp of powder-smoke, but I saw none, though I knew that sight as well as sound travelled far in this Western air. It seemed to me that it was far out from the east that the report had come. I would not sleep yet awhile. Twilight was long, and I would trudge while it lasted. I had gone not more than a mile before

a twinkle of light appeared ahead, how far it was impossible to say, for it burned feebly. I addressed my steps in that direction. Suddenly the light vanished. How if it were Indians? I put my ear to the ground, but the lisping of wind in the sage was the only sound: so I went on, picking my steps cautiously and facing the star that twinkled over the void where the light had been.

Now a strange thing happened. It was that music came out of the earth. It was not the regimental band, far off. It was near,—a single instrument, violin or 'cello, from which some hand was drawing minor chords. The effect of these seemingly causeless harmonies in that stern land of silence was startling. I am not superstitious, I hope, but that thing sent a chill through me. Presently there was a wrong note. Aha! That was comfort. I do not know that spooks and angels may not sometimes sing flat or play sharp, but I do know that the wrong note put me at my ease, it was such a human, redeeming fault. I listened with interest now, for I wanted to find where the sounds came from, but as I listened some of the awe got hold of me again. It no longer seemed to be a disembodied music: a grave meaning had come into it,—the plaint of a great sorrow, now rising into passion, now deepening to pain as the notes throbbed high and low, mounting to screams, then sinking to despair,—always in minors.

Again the light! and now so near that it startled me. It was shining out of the earth not thirty feet away. Shadows of a head moved before it. On hands and knees I crawled forward. Presently I had my eye at the window of a dug-out. The shelter was small, and the window, through which the light was shining, could have been filled with an old hat. In approaching I had unwittingly aligned this opening and a brush fire within. Over this fire a man was boiling coffee, while another sat against the wall and played on a violin. The fire smoked and glimmered so that I could see little of the interior, except that it was bare, but a dogged dejection in the men seemed proper enough to any beings immured in such a rat-hole,—for hole it was, the floor being four feet or so below the ground-level, and the earth wall rising but three feet above it.

At last the man who was playing pushed back his slouch hat and showed a pale, melancholy face. Then he dropped the violin to his knee and gazed dreamily into the fire. Ordinarily I would have gone to the door at once and knocked for admission. The reason for my delay was that the men wore brass buttons. The fellow who had been boiling coffee was half obscured in the smudge, but I saw him start back a step and heard a profane exclamation. I thought he had burned his fingers. He made a hurried remark to his comrade, set the pot on the ground, and turned his back to the window. The two then drew together and dropped their voices and seemed to be examining something. I watched and waited for a couple of minutes, to no effect; then the tire and the thirst and the anxiety came over me anew, and I went around to the door—it was ajar—and pushed it open. The pale man faced me.

"Will you sell me a cup of coffee?" I asked. I heard a quick step behind me, and as the last word was spoken a handkerchief was thrown

over my mouth,—one of those blanket bandannas that mounted men wear around their necks when they are on service in the alkali country. I struggled to lift it, but the pale man presented a revolver at my head and said, in a low voice, "Hands up!" I raised my hands straightway.

"Now, my buck," said the man behind me, "you may as well understand you never get out of here if you're after tryin' any tricks with us. A word, a sign to your pals outside, an' off comes the top of your head. Keep his hands up, Joe, till I see if he has a gun. He has. I'll cover him with it while you take a squint around. Pst! Quiet, now."

The handkerchief was still tight across my mouth, the ends held in a strong hand, and I felt a cold substance pressing against the back of my neck: it was my own revolver. The pale man went cautiously out at the door. I heard his steps crackle in the brush, faintly, and some minutes went by,—four or five, I presume, though they seemed hours to me, for a fold of the handkerchief was across my nose and I could hardly breathe. When the absentee returned it was with a careless step.

"It's all right," said he. "Nobody outside. Let him go."

The handkerchief was whipped off, and the man who had been holding it stepped in front of me. I gave two or three deep gasps and dropped to the earth bench.

"You twisted the cloth too tight," said the one called Joe.

"Sure, how was I to know he wasn't from the fort? Begorra, he is!" exclaimed the other. "I remember seein' him at quarters the day we skipped."

Joe raised his finger to his lip.

"Bah!" continued his companion. "He knows us well enough. He knows the reward he gets for peaching on deserters. Don't you, now? And maybe you thought we'd walk quietly back with you."

"Men," I said, "I don't know you, and it makes little difference to me who you are. If you think I've come to arrest you, does it strike you as anywise absurd that I have come alone, on foot, with no arms but a revolver? Give me some water and a bite of bread and a sip of that coffee. I'll pay you for it."

Joe offered me a pail of water, from which I drank eagerly. Then he went to the fire and took up the pot. He also cut a slice from a tough, brown loaf that was wrapped in paper. "It's right enough, Mike," said he. Then he sat and watched me with a long, puzzled look, as if he was trying to recollect something.

Mike planted himself before me in the firm attitude of one who is about to go through sabre drill, dismounted, and looked at me long and searchingly. "And where are ye bound?" he queried.

"To Bitter Root barracks, to get the stage. I'm due in New York on the 18th."

"H'm! Are ye in the service?"

"No."

"And what have ye done with your horse?"

"I have none. I'm a good walker, and but for losing the trail I should have reached the barracks before this."

"What led ye to come here?"

"I stumbled on the place by accident. I have been knocking about here in the lots for the last six hours."

"Drop it, and give the lad a sup." It was Joe who interrupted, as he pushed Mike with his elbow and placed the slice of bread and a cup of steaming coffee in my hand. Good coffee, too, for it came out of the army stores. I knew the flavor. I stood on no ceremony, but bolted my supper in a dozen swallows and handed back the cup, the only one in the place, as it seemed. They proceeded more leisurely, for they had roast game of some kind, with a rind of bacon,—a precious possession that stirred my envy.

Seeing my wistful look, Joe cut a bit from the breast of the bird, and was about to offer it to me, when the other stayed him. "He's going on to barracks, where they'll be having plenty, and officers' mess at that, while the devil knows where we're to get the next meal after breakfast. To hell with it all! I wish I was back at the fort, and if it wasn't for doing time I'd go."

"Well, I wouldn't," said Joe, in a tone that held latent force in it, "and I couldn't." And he did as he first intended: he gave me the bit of meat.

"How much do I owe you?" I asked, rising.

"Pah! Nothing," said Joe.

"Sure, I think it was worth as much to us as it was to him," retorted Mike. "Call it a quarter."

"Willingly," quoth I, pulling out the coin, which Joe refused and Mike slipped into his pocket. And I added, "If you'll point my nose for the barracks I'll make it a half."

"It's not easy to do that, at night," drawled Mike, reflectively. "It's five miles in a bee-line about southeast. But you have to go up a mile to cross Dry Fork valley, and after that you've to see your way round Pinnacle Butte, for the rocks is bad along there. Just up ag'in' the east side of the butte you'll find the trail fast enough, for it's nigh as big as a road."

"Better camp here till morning," said Joe. "For you're likely to break your neck if you stir far."

I went to the door and looked out. It was a still night, but for the trailing of the wind, and the stars were glittering like diamonds on the blue-black overhead. The solitude was oppressive. I did not know who or what these men were, but they at least were men, and I had probably discovered the worst about them. I turned back. "If you'll agree not to hold me up or gag me again, I believe I'll stay."

Mike smiled. Joe laughed quietly. "We'll agree to that," said he. "And here's your gun again. We used you a little rough, but you gave us a scare too. Mike, there, when he got the first glimpse of your face at the window, took you for the banshee."

"G'way wi' you," protested Mike.

"They tell of a creature that roams along Dry Fork in search of its lost soul. It's what they used to call a vampire, I think,—one of those things that come out of the grave and keep their human form so long as they can drink human blood once a year. If they miss a year they never find their souls again."

Mike threw some chips on the fire, closed the door, and whistled with elaborate carelessness. Joe made a sly wink at me. I filled my pipe and offered tobacco to the others, and presently we were smoking comfortably. Joe's pipe was finished first, and he took up his violin, muted it, and played.

"When I heard that outside I was in doubt if it wasn't a spirit of some kind," said I.

"That's odd," said Joe, stopping the music again. "For they tell of this vampire that it is drawn by the sound of music, and will stay all night where it can hear it. Perhaps you are——"

Mike looked up at me for the half of a second with alarm in his eyes. Then he scowled a little and gazed into the fire, hoping that Joe had not caught the look; but he had, and he broke into a long chuckle which Mike pretended not to hear. Joe put the fiddle to his chin again, bending his head above it lovingly, and began to play once more.

I felt moved to say a word of praise: "You play well."

"If I'd had any schooling I think I might have played. I just picked it up."

"Then it is wonderful. You should have been a musician, not a soldier."

"That's true enough. I got into the army by—by—accident. I—it was a—a——"

"A woman?"

"Well, yes. That's what it was."

Soothed with the supper and the music, Mike had sunk down on his back against the earth bench, and had begun to breathe heavily. Joe looked toward him with a half contempt. "Being a musician by nature," he said, in a lower tone, "do you wonder that I dislike life—in the ranks?" He nodded toward the dozing man. "Spends half his time in the guard-house. That's why he's escaping."

"And you?"

The man sat silent for some moments. Finally he put his violin on his knee. "Mister," he said, "we spoke of vampires just now. Well, they're real. Only they don't suck blood. Bah! That wouldn't be enough. It's your heart they want,—your very heart. It amuses them to get it into their clutches, to squeeze it, to wring it, perhaps to break it." He paused, looking into the embers. "I know the breed," he added, in a tone of quiet decision, that seemed to end his talk on the subject. His fiddle was going again. "Think I can play well enough to get a job, East? Some theatre or something?" he queried.

"Anybody can play well enough to be in a theatre orchestra," I answered, in a bitterish try at being humorous.

He looked up with a simple questioning that smote me. "Oh, you mean they are so bad," he said.

"That's no reflection on you, for, honestly, you play uncommonly well, to my thinking. You have taste, your expression is good, you have individuality. A little schooling and practice will make an artist of you."

His smile of pleasure was so child-like that it was worth seeing. He disguised it by affecting to look at the callous spots on his hands,—tapering, well-shaped hands, but rough and red. Mike was now asleep. With his lower face fallen, he looked more the bully than ever.

"How do you expect to get clear?" I asked.

"Oh, we'll strike a ranch or some little slab town after dark, and swap these clothes for something quieter. Then we'll work along to the railroad and get a job braking, or beg a lift. Between tramping and working and hooking rides, I reckon we ought to be due East in a month, or less."

"And you're not afraid of being caught?"

"Yes, I am. And I don't suppose I'm going to feel like a white man for the next ten years, on account of this scrape. I had only another year to serve. I ought to have stayed. But—but—I couldn't. At home they'll suppose I've served my time. Maybe, if I get on, I can send a check to the Secretary of War, telling him it's to buy my discharge. The law is too hard on—deserters—in peace-time, anyway. We don't harm any one by quitting work." There was a pause. "Going far East?"

"Some distance," I said. "I live in a little place called New Britain, Connecticut."

"The—blazes—you—do?" exclaimed the deserter.

"What is there remarkable about it?" quoth I.

"Oh, nothing; but I came from there myself."

"The world isn't very big, is it?"

"No, it's a blamed small world. I'm only hoping it's large enough to keep from meeting some unpleasant people." He stirred the fire until it sent up a little flame.

"You and I ought to be near of an age, and, now I look at you fair, I've seen you before. Did you go to school number 2 along in 1875?"

"I did that, and I know you, now. Your name is Frank Griffin. Your father was a physician, and you lived in a big old house with a lot of maples around it at the upper end of——"

"Right!" and, for no reason that I can recall, I thrust out my hand and clutched his. Both laughed. The meeting was warming, in the desert, and the mud cabin became cozy.

"You've a right to know my name," said the deserter, after a time, "but, if you can't think of it, just fancy it's Grimsby. That's how it stands on the company books."

"It's some years since you were home?"

"Seven or eight. I expect to find myself forgotten. People change, people move away, people rise in the world, some people sink. When they rise they're terrible hard on those who don't."

"And it's the other way, too; but it's a notion of mine that change in most people is not so much a rising or falling as it is a lateral change, so to speak: they broaden out."

"Some do, and some grow narrow. I suppose you know that there's another townsman of ours over at the fort."

"You mean Lieutenant Hathorne? Yes. I've been visiting him."

"Did he speak of me? No, of course not. Why should he? I licked him once, in school. Well, I found he hadn't forgotten it. I was sent here a month ago. I tried to get a transfer to another post, and I know he tried to get me shipped, but some blamed thing always interfered."

"You don't mean that he roughed it on you in revenge."

"N-no. Not in a way you'd understand. You've never been in the army. You know his sister, don't you? Alice?"

This use of a woman's name by a private soldier meant a good deal. I looked at alias Grimsby. He met my gaze frankly, if sadly, and then and there I felt sorry for him. There is an aristocracy in shoulder-straps. Women relatives of officers encourage it. In our country the man who has worn a private's jacket can seldom hope to enter that aristocracy, except in war-time, when promotions are easy.

"Grimsby" resumed his fiddling, softly and reflectively, and I, having no tact to carry the talk further, lighted a second pipe. The warmth, the tire, the smoke, and the music were making me drowsy.

"If you don't mind," I said, "I'll take a snooze."

"Make yourself as comfortable as you can. The brass bedstead's out of order, and the pillows have gone to the blacksmith's for repairs." He uttered this nonsense without a smile. I pulled off my coat, hat, and shoes, and spread them out to get such air as they might. A rise in the clay bench and a bunch of sage were the pillow. I stretched myself on this rude couch with a nearly luxurious sense of ease, and the sound of Joe's fiddle, very low and soothing—he had muted the strings—was the last that was in my ears. A little later I half awoke with a chill and felt an army overcoat being drawn carefully over me. Then I slept like a top,—for how long I don't know. It must have been about two in the morning that I woke, and if I were asked why I did that, I should have to say fairly that I haven't the least idea. I had heard no noise; there had been no talking, no flashing of a light. The fire was almost dead, but I saw Mike sprawled on one side of the room and "Grimsby" on the floor close at my side. Then I looked up at the window, with a queer sense of having been called, or seen. I need not tell what every one knows, that you can wake a man out of the soundest sleep by just looking at him. A star twinkled outside; then a dark bulk shut it from sight, and presently I could make out that it was a head. I don't know what made me think of vampires then, but for just one second I suffered with a chill. Who was it, what was it, and what did it mean in the desert at that hour?

Mike rolled upon his back and choked himself with a snore. Whoever or whatever was at the window knew, now, that the place was occupied. I pretended to toss in my sleep, and incidentally I dropped my hand on Joe's arm. He was not to be startled into any self-disclosures. A man can sleep with his troubles. The change in his breathing told that he was awake; then his breathing stopped altogether, and I knew that he was watching the window. The head against the sky did not move, and there was no sound but the wind.

As softly as I could frame the word I whispered, "Play." To this day I cannot tell why I said it. The faintest possible rustle proved

that Joe was moving, but perhaps it was to get his revolver. To cry out might warn away the intruder, yet it might bring a band upon us. If I sounded an alarm, the hot, ungentle Mike would certainly begin to shoot. If I spoke, I might draw a fire from the figure at the window, looking in at us, as I had looked in some hours before. But these anxieties faded when I became conscious of music. It seemed to grow out of nothing, so soft it was. Joe was a wonder. It was no tune that he was playing; only chords, strangely modulated, sad, sweet, unearthly. Still the figure bided at the window; still the night seemed heavy with sleep. A slow harmonic change led the music into Schumann's "Träumerei." The bulk at the window moved a little; it was drawing away; it was gone.

And I'm blessed if I didn't go to sleep again.

In the dawn Joe roused me, in a low voice. Mike was still oblivious, and I believed that Joe intended to leave without waking him. As he packed his kit I caught the flutter of a silk ribbon,—odd property for a soldier. He stole through the door, letting in a gush of cold air. I followed. It was one of those crystalline days, imported from paradise, that fall oftener on our Western plains than on any other part of the earth. Distance is annihilated as you look around, the sky is like the sea, and the air would put life into a mummy. Filling my lungs and stretching myself, I did not wonder that people who lived out here became so charged with activity that they hunted for fight to work it off. No creature was in sight except a slinking coyote, half a mile away.

Suddenly Joe gave a start and muttered, "Cavalry boots!" He was looking down at some tracks in a sandy hollow,—tracks of a man's feet going away from the dug-out. They led to a space of ground that had been freshly stamped by hoofs and boots. An object lay close by. I picked it up, a cigar-case with the letters "F. H.," in Indian embroidery, on the cover. It was Frank Hathorne's. I showed it to Joe, who pressed it back upon me and put his sleeve to his eyes. "He's been here," he exclaimed. "He's found me and gone back. I'm not worth arresting. I'm the scum of the earth. I'm doing as he wants—as they want—when I sneak off, like a thief. Yes, I'll go. I'll go."

And, to my amazement, he pulled the wisp of ribbon from his pocket and fell to the earth, crying over it.

"Wouldn't it be better," said I, for lack of any other remark at hand, "to go back and give yourself up?"

"And be sent to prison and have the disgrace of it on them?"

"Prison life is hard, and that's a fact."

"If that was all! No. I'll go East. I'll give her the chance for divorce she's hoping for."

"You are deserting to give a woman a ground for suing against you?"

"Yes."

"And your wife?"

"She's Lieutenant Hathorne's sister."

Charles M. Skinner.

THE CHICAGO DRAINAGE CHANNEL.

THE greatest feat of sanitary engineering in the world. That is what the completion of the Drainage Channel, proper, of the Chicago Sanitary District, at an expense of \$27,000,000, will represent. It is expected that this event will take place within a short time; and when it does, the occasion will be memorable, for this mammoth undertaking has been hedged about, from the time it was first seriously proposed to the present, with almost insurmountable difficulties. Indifferent legislators in the Assembly of the State of Illinois; legislators who were interesting themselves in the enterprise solely for the purpose of securing "boodle;" hostility of cities and towns in the territory to be affected by the operation of the Drainage Channel; unwillingness of Chicago citizens to bear the expense of constructing the proposed canal,—these were among the contingencies that harassed those who realized the inestimable value of the water-way if it were once constructed, to say nothing of the formidable perplexities attending the actual building, such as the excavating of thousands of tons of solid rock, the diverting of rivers, and the devising of machinery fitted to cope with the vastness of the work.

Yet the undertaking is nearing a successful end, and is likely to prove the beginning of a development that will immeasurably advance the already powerful commercial life of the middle West, for manufacturing projects of prodigious proportion await but the day of completion to be evolved into practical activity. In process of time, it is also hoped by those of generous vision, the government will construct a ship-canal from Hennepin, Illinois, a point on the Illinois River some sixty miles southwest of Lockport, which latter town is the lower termination of the Drainage Channel. When this shall have been done, there will be a short route for the largest ships to come from the Lakes direct to the Mississippi.

Absolute necessity was the inspiration of the Drainage Channel,—necessity for the disposal of the sewage of the city of Chicago; though the arrangement that the channel was also to be used as a ship-way was undoubtedly the prominent factor in gaining requisite support from the Illinois Assembly. Chicago has an average length of twenty-five miles, and an average width of nine miles. Owing to the peculiar location of the Chicago River, the city is divided into three parts, the North Side, as it is called, the West Side, and the South. The north branch of the river enters the city through the northwest portion, and meets, in the heart of the city, the south branch, which comes down from the southwest part. The point where these branches meet is about a mile due west from Lake Michigan, into which the Chicago River empties. Into this river most of the offal of the great city is thrown, so that Chicago is trisected, virtually, by an open sewer. The current of the river is so sluggish that often, in case of storm, the flow is changed and the sewage sent inland. Upon other occasions the accumulation of sewage

in the lake is so great and crusts the surface to such a distance that there is grave danger of the water even in the vicinity of the "cribs" being contaminated. These "cribs" are caissons sunk, at distances of four and six miles, out in the lake. In them are pumping-engines. By their energy and the aid of conveyance-pipes the city derives its supply of drinking-water. The condition of the river is usually such that it resembles a dense black muck, and the smell is something herculean in vigor. It was this menace to the health and reputation of Chicago that created an agitation which had been raging with intermittent fervor for many years, at last culminating, in 1889, in a law passed by the Illinois Assembly authorizing the construction of the Drainage Channel.

According to the provisions of this law, a huge channel was to be constructed from Chicago southwestward to Lockport, a distance of twenty-eight miles, where it would meet the Desplaines River. Through this channel the entire volume of sewage of the city was to flow into the Desplaines, thence into the Illinois River, which the Desplaines meets just below Joliet, some eight miles south of Lockport. From here the matter would be carried on by the Illinois southwesterly through the State, and ultimately to the Mississippi at Alton, Illinois. This channel was to be one hundred and sixty feet wide, eighteen feet deep in such portions as were cut through the rock, and fourteen in the cuts through the glacial or "drift." This course was to flow, by letting in a constant volume from Lake Michigan, three hundred thousand cubic feet of water per minute, at a current not exceeding three miles per hour. Along the route are, among others, the prosperous cities and towns of Joliet, Morris, Ottawa, La Salle, Lacon, Chillicothe, Peoria, Pekin, Havana, and Beardstown. It was the prospect of this great mass of sewage coming down the Illinois valley that aroused, from the moment the enterprise was first broached, the enmity of these "valley towns," as they are termed, and their representatives have been tireless in their efforts to retard the work of building the canal. The average daily sewage-output of the city of Chicago is fifty thousand cubic feet per minute. It is claimed that with the channel carrying three hundred thousand cubic feet of water per minute this matter will be effectually diluted. In justice to these cities, however, it should be said that they certainly will suffer inconvenience; yet there seems to be no way to remedy the objections they have set forth. Undoubtedly, too, a host of damage suits will result, as, with the stipulated flow in the channel, the Illinois River will be raised from two to three feet above its present height, and hundreds of acres of the most fertile bottom-lands will be under water.

The entire length of the Drainage Channel will finally be about thirty-seven miles. The main channel, referred to in the foregoing, extends from Lockport to the South branch of the Chicago River at Robey Street, Chicago, twenty-eight miles, but, in addition, a channel to connect with Lake Michigan will be opened up northwesterly through the city, striking the lake at Sixteenth Street, a distance of about nine miles. This matter of constructing the short channel is of lesser importance, as the sewage pumping works of the city are located

near the upper termination of the main channel,—that is, at Robey Street and the South branch.

In arranging for the administration of this undertaking the Sanitary District of the city was laid out. This district comprises all of Chicago north of Eighty-Seventh Street, together with forty-three square miles of Cook County. The assessed value of the taxable property of this territory is over \$250,000,000. The work is under the direct supervision of a Board of Trustees consisting of nine members. These men are all elected by popular vote. For the raising of funds, the board has authority to lay taxes upon the Sanitary District to the extent of one-half of one per cent. of all the taxable property in its confines, as the same shall be assessed and equalized for State and county taxes of the year in which the levy was made. The board may issue bonds to the limit of five per cent. of the value of the taxable property, as determined by the last assessment of State and county taxes previous to issuance of said bonds, provided that this five per cent. does not exceed \$15,000,000. Under this power, \$12,000,000 of five per cents. and four and a half per cents. have already been issued.

Actual construction of the main channel began on "Shovel" day, September 3, 1892, when earth was first broken on the rock cut at Lemont, just above Lockport. Interesting ceremonies attended this occasion, the State executives and many distinguished public and scientific men being present. In the prosecution of the work one of the first obstacles to be overcome was the Desplaines, which flows through a part of the valley in which the channel is being cut. This river is of very wide fluctuation. Sometimes its whole discharge would pass through a six-inch pipe. Again, its volume exceeds eight hundred thousand cubic feet per minute and floods the valley. To secure control of this, what was known as the "river diversion channel" had to be built, at a cost of \$1,000,000. Nearly thirteen miles of new river-channel had to be excavated parallel with the location of the main drainage course, which is to receive the waters of Lake Michigan and pass them on by the Desplaines and Illinois Rivers to the Mississippi. The width of this river diversion, on the bottom, is two hundred feet.

At the head of this "diversion" it was necessary to construct a "spill-way," to permit the surplus water to flow toward Chicago, because arrangements have not yet been made for carrying the entire flood of the Desplaines down through Joliet. This "spill-way" is a concrete dam capped with cut stone and its wings faced with stone masonry. It is three hundred and ninety-seven feet long, and its crest is 16.25 feet above Chicago datum. (This datum is referred to the low water of Lake Michigan of 1847, and is 579.61 feet above sea-level at Sandy Hook.) No water flows over this "spill-way" until the volume passing the water gauge above it reaches 800,000 cubic feet per minute.

The total amount of excavation involved in the construction of the main channel is 26,437,267 cubic yards of glacial drift and 11,718,101 cubic yards of solid rock, or an aggregate of 38,155,368 cubic yards, to which must be added the material taken from the river diversion:

glacial drift, 1,654,510 cubic yards; solid rock, 260,561 cubic yards; total river diversion, 1,915,071. Grand total, main channel and river diversion, 40,070,439 cubic yards. All of this work is now under contract, and, in addition thereto, 327,000 yards of retaining wall. The retaining wall is all to be laid in cement mortar. The rock when broken up expands about eighty per cent., and therefore the volume of the rock spoil banks will be about 21,300,000 cubic yards. The whole volume of earth and rock if deposited in Lake Michigan in fifty feet of water would make an island one mile square, with its surface eight feet above the water-line.

The largest output of material made in any one month since this work was inaugurated was in August, 1894, when the estimate of payment reached 1,160,613 cubic yards of glacial drift and 415,900 cubic yards of rock, calling for the payment of \$665,052.31, a record probably not excelled since man began to quarry in stone. The estimated cost of all the elementary work under contract is \$21,354,074.04. Of this, \$2,606,227.92 have been expended in acquiring right of way, and \$18,747,846.12 are demanded for construction. The completion of the entire course,—that is, from Lockport to Lake Michigan,—with full equipment, such as the building of seven railway and seven highway swing bridges across the channel between Chicago and Joliet, these alone costing \$2,000,000, the acquirement of extra right of way, and unexpected litigations, will approximate an expenditure of nearly \$31,000,000.

In the building of the great channel, many novel and specially constructed machines have been brought into use, some of which are destined almost to revolutionize the methods of excavating in rock and drift. One of the most remarkable engines is the huge "cantilever crane," a contrivance that was invented by a firm of contractors after the channel was begun. It is essentially a bridge spanning the channel, with cantilever arms projecting far enough beyond on each side to overhang the spoil area. On this structure are mounted the sprocket wheels and other appurtenances for carrying a series of steel pans which form the conveyer belt. The structure is six hundred and forty feet from end to end. It is mounted on trucks travelling along tracks parallel with the channel. Its estimated capacity is five hundred cubic yards per hour.

Sections A, B, and a portion of C are located in the old bed of the Desplaines, and are overlaid with muck to a considerable depth. This muck is removed in hydraulic dredges, each of which is capable of taking out about two thousand five hundred yards in ten hours.

On the rock sections, channelling machines are used which cut the sides down vertically. Steam drills are employed, and on certain sections these are manipulated by means of compressed air.

The existing contracts called for the completion of this work by April 30, 1896, but there have been the inevitable delays incident to a work of this magnitude. It seems certain, however, that the entire main channel, from Robey Street to the "upper basin" or lake near Joliet, will be completed this year.

Aside from the sanitary problems that the Drainage Channel will

solve, the industrial possibilities that it opens the way for are tremendous. It is estimated that nearly \$30,000,000 would be required fully to develop the manufacturing power that will soon be possible between Lockport and Ottawa, a little city some fifty-two miles southwest of the lower termination of the channel. One of the engineers employed by the Board of Sanitary Trustees estimates that there will be in this territory available force to the extent of 80,000 horse-power. What this means can be judged to some extent when it is known that the mighty and long-used power at Minneapolis is but 30,000 horse-power. The principal centres of power will be at Lockport, pool below Joliet, and Marseilles and Ottawa on the Illinois River. There is a fall of eighty-two feet between the surface of Lake Michigan and the surface of the Illinois at Ottawa. It is worthy of note that the principal elementary expense called for would be in the construction of dams, locks, breakwaters, and "cut-offs."

The location of this enormous supply of power has an especial value, owing to its being central. The vicinity is gridironed with important railway lines, such as the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific, the Chicago and Alton, and the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fé. It is not improbable that with the completion of the channel cotton-mills in the West will become a reality, for the raw material could be brought up from St. Louis at a trifling expense, as compared with that of getting it into New England.

The opportunity for employing this water-power in connection with electrical energy suggests, also, vast commercial result. At a single point, near Lockport, according to the calculations of H. S. Putnam, a Chicago engineer, there is offered, for the purpose of transmitting electricity to Chicago, 5800 horse-power. He figures the cost of the requisite plant as \$3,000,000, and the rental at \$900,000, investors thus realizing thirty-two per cent. on their outlay.

This extensive manufacturing basis is not passing unnoticed. Already many great corporations have been or are being organized in this connection in New York and Chicago, one recently being capitalized at \$5,000,000 and planned to develop in the electrical field.

John L. Wright.

AFTER THE STORM.

THEY think because we write of grief and passion
That all the tempest of a heart is there.
Ah! this is not the heart's nor ocean's fashion!

Wait for the lull, when shores are broad and bare.

Wait till the storm is past, and ocean cowers

In vast submission to a fate too strong:

Then on the beach, in shreds of deep-sea flowers,

We find the shells, the broken shells, of song.

Mary McNeil Scott.

EUROPEAN HOUSEKEEPING.

TO an American, accustomed to the loose methods and wasteful habits of her country and people, there are few things more interesting and genuinely amazing than the thrift, the economies, the ways, of European households. Mrs. C., we will say, has taken a furnished house in London. She considers herself a good manager at home. She is determined not to be cheated abroad. She gets up in the morning, and, finding the day chilly, she decides to order coal and kindling. She gives an order accordingly that makes her coal-merchant lout low and smile with brown-sugared sweetness, while her cook stares, and, if she be an honest woman, cries out, "All that, mem? Where ever shall we put 'em? What ever shall we do with 'em?" She fears that she has made a mistake. Having plenty of American cleverness and adaptability, she rescinds half the order. The tradesman's face is a study now. His expression changes wonderfully, and so does his manner. The barometer has stood at "servile" and "obsequious." It drops to "civil disgust" toward her, while he flings a look of hatred at cook as he leaves the room, which, being interpreted, means, "You fool! you miserable marplot! What do you get by being so idiotic as to have a conscience? Why didn't you let her give a big order, and steal nobly and get your commission?" But Mrs. C. does not understand this at all.

When cook reports later in the day, "The coals 'ave been sent in, mem, and will you please to walk down and see 'em?" "I don't want to see it. What do I want to see it for?" asks Mrs. C., looking up from her book. "Oh, really, mem. Beg pardon, mem. But who is to see them weighed?" cook persists. "'Weighed.' Why, I never heard of such a thing," says Mrs. C., and stops reading, and begins reflecting. "Very well; I'll be down presently," she finally remarks, and cook courtesies and disappears.

She goes down and finds cook in her oldest gown and dusting-cap in the back offices, a scale before her, a basket at hand ready for the weighing. It takes her odd time for three mornings: result, one-fourth of a ton short of coal ordered and paid for, and five fagots of kindling unaccounted for. "It's that Miggs, mem. 'E's terrible dishonest. I've known 'im do it before, often. Just send 'im a note, mem," remarks cook, placidly, observing her mistress's bewildered look: "'e thinks you are a foreigner, mem, as doesn't know."

"All right," comments Mrs. C., and thinks of "the scorcher" she will presently indite. She is walking away, when cook stops her. "Wait a minute, mem, and I'll give you the key," she remarks.

"What! look up the coal? Good gracious! what a country!" thinks Mrs. C., while preserving outwardly her air of cool supremacy. "Jenny, just light a fire for me in my bedroom. Take some of that kindling."

"Beg pardon," says Jenny. "In your bedroom?" that being the

hour of the day when no Englishwoman ever is in her bedroom, and a fire in one being an unheard-of luxury except in case of illness.

"Yes: why not?" says Mrs. C., secretly irritated by perceiving something she doesn't understand.

"I'll send the 'ousemaid, mem," says Jenny. "Igscuse me sayin' that isn't my work." She speaks with a kind of sad dignity.

The "'ousemaid" is sent. She appears, very trim and trig in her prim dress. It is after twelve o'clock. She has on one of her "better-most" aprons, and a cap with a pink ribbon, and spotless cuffs and collar. She brings a hemp rug and places it before the fireplace, to avoid all injury to the carpet. She is rather grumpy, for it is late in the day for making fires: it is her hour for attending the door. She makes the fire, but under protest, as her profile clearly shows. Mrs. C. watches it done. "Where is your kindling?" she asks.

"'Ere, mem," says Susan. She produces a single stick about the size of one of her own pudgy fingers. She proceeds to split it into smithereens—literally. She first fills the bottom of the grate with paper. She adds the wood, and a wedge of straw. She chooses first the small and then larger and larger bits of coal, and disposes them carefully in the grate. She fishes in her scuttle and produces five clay balls.

"Why, what have you got there?" asks Mrs. C., unable to restrain her curiosity.

Susan stares with round eyes. There is nothing on earth half as stupid outside of his regular duties, or a fiftieth part as narrow-minded always and everywhere, as an English servant.

"It's only the balls, please, 'm," she remarks.

"Bring them here. I want to see them," says Mrs. C.

Susan brings them. "They're the reg'lar size," she ventures to say.

"But what are they for? I never saw them used before," says Mrs. C.

Susan is staggered. "*Indeed, mem?*" she finally remarks, when her mind has recovered somewhat from the shock of "*autre pays, autres mœurs.*" She condescendingly explains, "It's to save the coals, mem. A grate does so h'eat up the coals. It's *h'awful*, mem."

"Why, of course it heats the coal. And I suppose it heats these balls, too. Go on, Susan. Let me see how they answer. We build our fires altogether of coal in America," says Mrs. C.

"You don't mean it, mem! What a wicked country, mem! H't's lucky the poor English doesn't 'ave to live there," says Susan, waxing mildly impertinent, after the manner of her kind.

"Oh, you think so? They would be lucky if they could all go there, on the contrary," remarks Mrs. C., and takes up her book. "At this rate, I've bought kindling enough for a year," she thinks.

Susan touches off her well-laid structure, gathers up her implements after "tidying up the grate," and leaves the room. In an hour the whole grate is full of red-hot coal apparently, and is throwing out a tremendous heat. It keeps it all day.

"Well, I've learned something to-day," remarks Mrs. C. to Mrs.

C. "I must tell Harry about it when he comes home to dinner." She walks to the window and looks out. She sees Charlotte Brontë's "inverted pewter-cup skies." It is raining. The row of trees in front of the house looks yellow and melancholy. Great heaps of leaves are lying beneath. "I'll have them cleared off," she thinks. She rings her bell. Susan answers it.

It happens that Susan "knows the very man." He appears as if by magic, and is to be seen with his wheelbarrow hard at work. The job done, Susan enters with a tray on which is "two and six."

"What is that for?" asks Mrs. C., utterly bewildered.

"H't's for the leaves, mem. My brother says it's exactly what's bein' paid all over."

It is Mrs. C.'s turn to stare now. "What do you mean?" she asks.

"E's payin' you for the leaves, mem," Susan repeats, "if you please. 'E's 'auled them all away for manure. And that's the regular price. 'E's not one to cheat nobody, American nor English nor French, call themselves wot they like."

Mrs. C. is staggered now. She has watched the man. She has seen that he is apparently the poorest of the poor. She pushes aside the tray impatiently. "I don't want his money!" she exclaims. "Take it right back to him. And here! give him this, and thank him for doing it so nicely and promptly." She hands Susan a half-crown.

Susan can scarcely believe her eyes. She courtesies repeatedly. She gives enough thanks to have served if Mrs. C. had saved her life. She goes down-stairs and tells cook. Cook tells the tradespeople. The tradespeople tell everybody. From that moment Mrs. C. is a pigeon, and all England is engaged in plucking her.

She goes down-stairs next morning to give orders. "That ash-barrel there,—it should be emptied, cook," she remarks, incidentally.

"So it ought, mem: you're quite right. But I 'ave been that busy with the cradle——"

"With the cradle? What cradle, pray? Have you a baby on the premises?" asks Mrs. C., all at sea.

"Oh, no, mem. I've no young children; and if I 'ad I'm never one to bring it 'ere unbeknownst to you. I'm not like that, mem. My mother brought me up to be open and above-board always in h'all my dealin's, and I'm glad of it. There's some as thinks me foolish, and I know I loses in a way by it. But when I goes to bed at night I goes to *sleep*,—w'ich is more than *they* can say, mem. I meant I 'ad been siftin' the coals. Would you be pleased to look at them?" She leads the way to where a large pile of ashes and a small pile of half-burned coal have been put. "I'm very partickler, mem. Never is the day w'en I lets my coals go unsifted."

"All right, cook," says Mrs. C.

"And I'll see as the h'ashes goes to-day. I'll not neglect it," cook adds.

"The *hashes*? Oh, I see," says Mrs. C.

That afternoon Jenny appears with fourpence ha'penny on a silver tray, saying, "From the dustman, mem."

"What? Do you mean that I am paid here for having my ashes

taken away? Why, it's the most ridiculous thing I ever heard of. Get out! Take the man's money back to him, and tell him he can have all he will take for nothing. I never *heard* of such a thing," cries Mrs. C.

She has learned something. This time she does not insist on paying for the service rendered, though she feels about as mean and small as she has ever done in all her life.

That evening cook is called to Devon by a very sick mother. The house-agent sends in a substitute next day, and, as the drawing-room windows have been splashed by the rain, the first thing asked of her is that she shall wash them.

"Please to igscuse me, mem, if I say h'as I cannot and will not,—it not bein' my work,—w'ich——" she begins.

"Very well; if Mr. C.——" begins Mrs. C.

"I couldn't *think* of it, mem. Not if Mr. C. was a Jook or the H'archbishop of Canterbury—w'ich if you was an English lady you'd never h'arsk me to so demean myself, mem," replies the substitute: "h't's the footman's place where one is kep, and here it's the 'ousemaid's."

"But she has gone out for the afternoon," says Mrs. C.

"That's not my business, mem," says the substitute, firmly.

"But some one may call," says Mrs. C., hotly.

"That's your business, mem, if I may make so bold," remarks the substitute.

"Impudent baggage!" thinks Mrs. C.: "if I had any one to take her place I'd send her packing." Then, aloud, "Do you know of any one who could do them, cook?"

"Oh, yes, mem: the very woman! I'll get 'er in at once," says cook, at once all smiles, and in ten minutes a meek creature in a poke bonnet and alpaca gown arrives. She does the windows quietly and perfectly, and, approaching Mrs. C. in a poke bonnet hastily resumed, says, "'Alf a crown, mem, if you please." Mrs. C. gets her purse and is about to pay the substitute of a substitute, when an English friend who has just come in and has chanced to hear this interjects, "For what? Now I'll wager something you are about to be fleeced, my dear." On the situation being explained, she cries out, "Half a crown, indeed! Not a bit of it! Tuppence a window. The wretch!"

"But that is so little," says Mrs. C., whose American soul revolts from such prices.

"Well, my dear, if you like to ruin yourself, you may. You Americans have ruined the Continent for us, and, charming as you are, do leave us England," says the friend.

"Sit right down. Tell me, *do*," says Mrs. C., "what did cook mean by asking me what I should sell her the drippings for, and what was she to do with the 'second teas'? What are 'second teas'? and what are 'drippings'?"

"My dear, is it possible? Drippings from your meat,—excellent for frying fish, for making cake for the nursery, for a dozen things. You never heard of them? What can America be like? How frightfully rich you must all be! And the teas—well, we dry our tea

after it is drawn. It is then done up in packages and resold to the grocer, who resells to the poor. I give mine to my cook, and she makes ninenpence a week from it," explains the friend.

"Good gracious alive! I never heard of such a thing!" exclaims Mrs. C. This formula has become like "Selah" in the Psalms.

"And your candle-ends; I hope you save those, and sell them to the tallow-chandler again. I do. I am a pauper for my rank of life, you know," the friend goes on.

"Sell my candle-ends?" gasps Mrs. C.

"Of course. Why not, pray? And I hope you don't peel your potatoes?"

"Not peel my potatoes?" says Mrs. C., faintly.

"Certainly not. Scrub them with a brush, but never peel them. It is so wasteful. And of course you weigh your meat every morning, and your bread also?"

"No, I don't. I never heard of——" begins Mrs. C.

"My dear, you'll be ruined,—simply ruined. Do you change your tradesmen every three months?—you will, you must."

"But why? They serve me admirably, and I've no fault to find with them," Mrs. C. remarks, with heat.

"My dear, every one of them gives the cook a commission after three months, and some of them from the start. Oh, you poor innocent! How you'll be chived and cheated right and left!" says the friend, with a laugh.

"Why, if the dustmen and the workmen and the tallow-chandler pay me, and the cook buys what's left, it won't cost anything to live in England," cries Mrs. C.

"Oh, won't it, just? Poor unsuspecting girl that you are. Just wait till your bills come in. That's all," remarks her friend.

Well, the bills came in. They were simply frightful. Mrs. C. discharged everybody. She set herself to learn all that her friend, a model housewife, could teach her. She learned it all. The bills dropped to a figure that she thought absurd often, under cook the first, and herself, and the friend.

But the year following she went to Paris, taking her faithful English cookie with her. And there her French friends held up their hands over what they considered her frightful extravagance. Such scraping of cheese, such boiling of bones, such utilizing of scraps, such selling of clothes—of everything—she had never even imagined. She had seven years of it, and when Mr. C. was recalled to America she jumped for joy. "I'll never economize again while I live!" she cried. "Thank Heaven there is still one country left where nobody knows how to economize!"

But when she came home she was at once so horrified by the general waste of everything that she could not go back to the old ways. And six months later Mr. C. failed. And now the C.'s live comfortably on twelve hundred a year,—a family of four,—and present a far better appearance than half the families they know who are spending three thousand.

Frances Courtenay Baylor.

EMMY'S GOING HOME.

PEOPLE say the great Henry Morseman, president of the A., B. & C. Railway, is a hard man. Perhaps he is; but I wonder whether, when God judges him, a certain chapter in his history will be taken into account.

Among the crowds that came out of the train which had just come to a stand-still in the Union Dépôt in Chicago was an old woman, dressed in the oldest of old fashions, wearing a black cashmere shawl pinned about her shoulders. She carried in one hand a good-sized market-basket with a cover to it, and in the other a bundle done up in a capacious bandanna handkerchief. As she walked she peered inquisitively about through her steel-rimmed spectacles. After much questioning of the officials, she found her way into the ladies' waiting-room, and sat down with a sigh of relief.

"Well, I declare ef I ain't tired!" she ejaculated, looking around at those near her in a neighborly way. "Do you know, I 'ain't rid on the steam-cars for I don't know how long, and I'm that cramped in my j'int's I cain't hardly move."

"It ain't good for rheumatism, this settin' still so long." This remark was addressed to a pleasant-looking but flashily dressed young man, who of all near her seemed not to turn away, but to listen sympathetically.

"No, indeed," replied he, affably, but in a low tone, and continued, "Perhaps I can be of some service to you, madam. Are you going to stop in the city?"

"Oh, yes," she said. "I come up after my daughter Em. She's been away for a long while. She never was satisfied on the farm, you know, but was always a-wantin' fine clothes and things, and was mighty discontented. So one day she run off. I tell you, it was mighty hard on me, but I bore up, with the Saviour's help, young man, 'cause pa took it so hard. It seemed to kind o' break him. It's been six year ago, but he's never been the same since. We live near Mullinsburg, down in Adams County."

"Is your daughter in Chicago?"

"Oh, yes. You see, we never heerd nothin' of her at all till just the other day I got a note from somebody or 'nother, I disremember the name, sayin' my daughter was here, and give me her address. Pa wanted to come, but he had to serve on the jury and couldn't git away, and so I says I'll come myself. The rest of the children's all dead, you know, and they ain't nobody left but pa and me. Pa he didn't want me to come, but I says I can take care of myself. So says I to pa, 'Pa, you write to Em and tell her when I'll be there.' So he wrote. But he's that careless he never put on the address, but just addressed it to Emmy Baker, Chicago. But he 'lowed it would git to her all right. So I'm a-waitin' for her now. I brung along fifty dollars, in case I needed any money." And she took out her pocket-book. "I cain't

see very well with these specs. They're my far-seein' specs. My near-seein' ones are in my basket."

The young man, upon the appearance of the money, seemed suddenly to acquire new interest. He moved to the seat next to her and said, "I think you had better have this money changed. It isn't a good plan to carry so much small change around with you. I will take it and have it changed at the ticket-office for larger bills, if you like."

"Why," exclaimed the old lady, evidently delighted with his attention, "I'm ever so much obliged. I guess it would be better to have it in large bills like."

"Oh, don't mention it. I will be glad to be of assistance to you." And the stranger took the roll of money and departed. Nor was he any more seen thereafter.

And all this time Henry Morseman stood near and saw the scene; but he had paid no attention until it was over. It was only after the man had gone that the situation flashed upon him. He had been pre-occupied with thoughts of his business. Now he turned and saw this motherly old woman opening her basket and fishing from it an unfinished sock and some yarn, with which she began serenely to knit.

"Madam," said the railway magnate, in an abrupt voice, "did you intrust your money to an entire stranger?"

"Mercy sakes!" she exclaimed, looking up. "How you scairt me! Why, yes, I give the young man my money to change. It's better to have your money in large bills, you know, when you come to the city."

"Well, he's probably a thief, and you'll never see your money again."

"Do tell!" she cried. "Why, the rascal! Why, where's the policeman? I'll have him arrested, sure. Won't you go and call the police? Why, that's all the money I got to git me and Emmy home on."

The old lady's face spoke of such utter simplicity that it smote into the tender part of Morseman's heart. He said,—

"Give yourself no alarm, madam. I will attend to it."

He turned away, walked around a block, and saw, the while he walked, the face of another old woman who many years ago had kissed him good-by as he went out into the world, had cried upon his shoulder, and called him "my son." When he returned he had a roll of bills in his hand.

"Here is your money, madam. The thief had just changed it, and was making off as the police caught him. They are taking him to the station now." Thus he lied.

"Well, well!" said the old woman. "I wouldn't 'a' thunk it of him, he was so pleasant-spoken like. I'm ever so much obliged to you, mister."

"Oh, don't mention it," said Henry Morseman. "Do you think your daughter will find you?"

"Oh, I guess so," she replied. "I told her I'd be here at the dépot on this train."

"Perhaps she never received the letter."

"Oh, yes; pa writes very plain; and he directed it to Miss Emmy Baker, Chicago."

"Then," thought the president, "it's certain she never received it." He added, audibly, "Have you your daughter's address with you?"

"Yes; here it is in this letter. No. —, — Place."

Henry Morseman gave a little start. The locality was a notorious resort of infamous characters. He gazed abstractedly awhile at the piece of paper. Presently he said,—

"I will go and see if I can find her. You stay here till I get back; and don't trust your money again to anybody."

He ordered his carriage, and gave the coachman an address that caused that functionary to shrug his shoulders and grin.

The stylish equipage dashed down the narrow lane, where on either side were the houses of death. At a certain number it halted. The railway president alighted and knocked upon the door. It was opened by a gaudily appressed woman in whose face still lingered the traces of youthful beauty.

"Can you tell me if Emma Baker is here?"

The woman turned pale.

"What do you want with Emma Baker?" she asked.

"Her mother is at the dépôt and wants to see her."

"My mother!" the girl whispered, catching her breath.

"You are the girl," said the man. "Get off those miserable clothes, dress yourself as modestly as you can, and I will take you in my carriage. Hurry up."

In a short time she reappeared. The rouge was washed off, and the face showed hard lines. The lips were drawn thin and white. She was clothed in a faded gown.

They said no words as they were rolled rapidly back to the station, but the woman looked as though she had been awakened from a dream in which she had been peering into the gates of hell.

The passengers waiting in the station were startled by a scream. The girl, forgetful of all around her, had thrown herself down before her mother and clasped her knees.

"Why, Emmy!" said the mother. "Why, Emmy! what's the matter? Don't take on so. I know you're glad to see me, but you mustn't take on so."

A crowd was collecting around the little group. The girl had fainted. Henry Morseman called an official and had the pair taken to a private office. He went in with them.

Pretty soon the daughter revived.

"Mother, dear old momsey, is it you?"

"Why, Emmy, yes, it's me," she replied, applying camphor to the girl's brow and cooing over her with little nursing attentions. "Why, you pore thing! You've been sick, 'ain't ye? You don't look very well. You look so holler around the eyes. I didn't know where you was, Emmy. Your pa and me was awful cut up when you went away. But we don't hold it ag'in' you, Emmy. Mebbe we spoilt you, I says to pa. You was always the pet, you know."

"Yes, yes, mother." And the girl sobbed afresh and hid her face in her mother's lap.

"Somebody wrote us your address, and pa he couldn't come, 'cause he's on the jury, and so I come. Have you been doin' well, Emmy?"

"Oh, no, no, no!"

"Well, it's hard for a girl to git along. But I s'pose you did sewin',—you was always good at that,—didn't you?"

"Yes," in a smothered voice.

"Your brother Dick died a year ago come June, and Mirandy died two year ago. So your pa and me is alone, and I thought, if you could stand it, it would be a great comfort to have you back with us."

"Yes; oh, yes!"

"Your pa's got a new team, instead o' them sorrels you used to drive, and old Towse is still a-livin', though he's not much good but to lay around the ha'th and snooze. You remember old Towse, Emmy?"

"Oh, mother, oh, mother, yes!"

"I fixed up your bedroom for you before I started,—the one off of ourn, you know. The mornin'-glories is a-runnin' all over the winder, same as they used to, and your crochet-work is still on the wash-stand, and I got out your little Bible I give you on your 'leventh birthday and put it on the bureau, Emmy. I trust you've always served the Lord, Emmy?"

"Oh, mother, oh, mother! don't, don't!"

"There, there, never mind, Emmy. I didn't mean that I doubted you: you was always a good girl, only full of life and mischief. Pa said he'd have the melodeon tuned up and varnished this fall when he sold his oats. Your pa'll be awful glad to see you, Emmy. He's said many a time, 'Oh, if Emmy was only here to sing "What a friend," and "Forever here"!' Just the other mornin' he woke me up, a-tossin' around, and I says, 'Pa, what is the matter?' And he says, 'Ma, I dreamt Emmy was here like she used to be, in her little gingham apron, and we was a-playin' bear and a-rompin' around like we used to, and suddent she just disappeared.' Your pa's wore your little locket on his watch-chain all the time, Emmy. You recollect when you give it to him?"

"Oh, father! Oh, mother! Oh! Oh!"

"There, don't cry. We'll be home soon, and you'll help me put up the fruit. It's just a-spilin'."

She lifted the girl's face to hers and kissed her. For a moment the latter forgot her agony of self-contempt, and, flinging her arms about her mother, kissed her again and again, with many endearing words.

Henry Morseman left the room. By and by he returned, and, handing the girl two tickets, said, "Here are your tickets home. Your train leaves soon. You'd better come and get on."

As the president of the A., B. & C. Railway assisted a faded-looking girl and an old woman into the train, the latter said,—

"Say, mister, perhaps you'd better not be too hard on that young feller you had sent to the calaboose. Mebbe he was tempted suddent, or somethin'. Don't you be too hard on him."

And the face of Henry Morseman was wet.

Frank Crane.

MUSICAL MEXICO.

ONE does not have to travel far or stay long in Mexico to discover that it is quite as much a musical country as any other in the world. Even the stay-at-home Americans, a dozen or so years ago, fancied that they had made this discovery, when Mexican military bands and Typical Orchestras began to "tour" the United States, astonishing as well as delighting the crowds they attracted everywhere. But the truth is, the American stay-at-homes, with all their admiration for the music the Mexicans brought to them, gained scarcely any idea of how far the Mexicans were to be classed as a musical people. They supposed, very naturally, that the famous —th Regiment Band and the Typical Orchestra comprised all, or about all, that Mexico had to send abroad; that they fully represented the music of their country; and that they were probably considered prodigies in the land whence they came. Such impressions are quickly dispelled in Mexico. The semi-weekly concerts in the Zócalo, the Alameda, and the Paseo, in the capital, do not suffer in the least when the Mexican War Department grants one of the military bands, even the best of them, leave of absence for a tour in the United States. And as for the other cities of the republic, even such comparatively isolated towns as Jalapa, Puebla, Oaxaca, Toluca, Chihuahua, Morelia, and Guadalajara, each has at least one military band that would be likely to carry off the honors in any competition with the military bands of America.

The Mexican Typical Orchestra was organized for the special purpose of representing to the Americans the characteristics of Mexican music. It became a permanent organization upon its return to its own country. In its conception and in the manner in which it was carried out to success it furnished proof of the high order of musical intelligence of the people of Mexico.

The military bands of Mexico are composed of men whose musical training has begun at an early age in the military preparatory schools and is to continue so long as they are able to play. I have seen boys not yet in their teens playing instruments at the schools under very careful instructors; and I have seen really excellent bands composed of boys not out of their teens, in several cities where these military schools exist. Once a member of a band, promotions for merit are rapid, until the best musicians find themselves together in the best band. The band-leaders are all skilled musicians,—some of them composers of music.

The musical taste and skill which those who have visited Mexico recognize as among the national characteristics are peculiar to no one class of society. It might, perhaps, be said even that they were developed more fully in the lower classes. There is a very good band in Atzacotzalco (not to mention a dozen other Indian towns) composed of the poorest class of Indians. Not one of the musicians wears shoes, or coat, or any other than the grimmest-looking linen trousers. And

one characteristic of the musical performances of the Mexicans, noticeable above all others, that is, precision of time, is especially marked in the little serenading parties, consisting of guitar, harp, flute, and violin, heard not only in the cities, but in the provincial towns and in the mountain villages.

As for the people of Mexico of every class, it may be said not only that they thoroughly appreciate good music, but that they will tolerate no music that is not good. This is no new phase of Mexican character. Madame Calderon de la Barca, early in the present century, in her book upon Mexico, called attention to the love of music which pervaded all classes of society, the people of the towns and those of the hamlets, in the mountains, and on the plains, the rich and the poor alike. And a writer upon Mexico half a century ago illustrates this all-pervading love of music by relating an amusing incident. It was at a time when the stage-coaches between the cities of Mexico and Vera Cruz were frequently waylaid and their passengers robbed of all they possessed. A famous tenor was once a passenger on his way to the Gulf coast from the capital, where he had filled a successful engagement. Being recognized by the highwaymen who "held up" the whole stage-load, he was offered a chance to secure his life and liberty by singing. In his frightened condition, his first efforts to sing were without success. The robbers insisted that he could do better, and that unless he did his best—unless he sang as well for them as he had sung for those who had just heard him in the capital—they would not allow him to go any further on his journey. Regaining his self-possession after repeated efforts, he found his audience the most critical and appreciative he had ever had. It applauded his good singing, it hissed his failures. He finally succeeded in satisfying his hearers, but it was only by doing the best he had ever done. And after enjoying the musical entertainment they had forced from him as long as they could without interfering with their regular daily occupations, the robbers allowed the singer to proceed on his journey.

A few years ago the prima donna of Mexico was la Señorita Angela Peralta, who enjoyed something of a European reputation and had sung with success in some of our American cities. I heard her in "Norma," in a little barn-like theatre on the frontier, early in 1883. She died the following summer of tonto fever, somewhere on the western coast of Mexico. I subsequently had an opportunity to witness what a hold she had on the affections of the people of her land. I was watching, from a balcony on one of the streets of the city of Mexico, the parade of the 16th of September, the birthday of Mexican Independence. Among the allegorical cars advancing along the street was one representing the music of Mexico. It had been arranged by the National Conservatory, and conspicuous thereon appeared the name PERALTA. As the name caught the eyes of a dozen or so ladies upon the balcony adjoining mine, there was a cheer, distinctly heard above the clamor of the street, and a shower of nosegays fell upon the car. And as the car passed on down the street it was everywhere greeted with cheers and flowers.

The church music of Mexico is apt to disappoint the visitor. Ap-

parently but little attention is given to sacred music in that land, where the government and the higher classes have long been at war with the Church. In some of the churches in the frontier towns, on Good Friday, I have heard some of the most weird music imaginable, from guitars and violins, with little suggestion of devotion in it. In the churches of the cities I have attended there were few if any functions where the music was remarkable save for its inferiority. It is, however, worthy of note that at Guadalupe-Hidalgo, near the capital, on the 12th of December, a feast especially belonging to the native Indian race, a mass was rendered in the Collegiate church which was the composition of a full-blooded Indian musician, and it was highly praised by the critics. Masses have sometimes been composed by natives for use at the cathedral in the city of Mexico, but they have not attracted much attention. In Lent, 1885, I heard Rossini's "Stabat Mater" beautifully rendered by the National Conservatory in one of the theatres of the capital on behalf of some public charity. And one Good Friday portions of the "Stabat Mater" were sung in the church of La Encarnación in the same city. But, beyond what has been mentioned, the churches of Mexico provide little in the way of music likely to impress the visitor. Were I in the city of Mexico, however, I should never willingly miss the chance to hear the great double organ played in the cathedral.

Noticeable at the performances of the National Conservatory was the prominent part taken by ladies. Not only harps and violins were played by them, but also violoncellos and bass-violos. The Mexican ladies give considerable attention to composing, and it is no uncommon thing at an evening party for a lady to be asked to favor the company with something of her own composition.

The Mexicans have a style of music peculiar to their land. Generally speaking, the waltz gives place to the polka, the mazurka, and the schottische; and all these give way to the *jarabe* and the *danza*. Some say that the *danza* is not indigenous to Mexico, but is an importation from Cuba. But the Mexicans have also the *habanera* (derived from Havana), and make a distinction between it and the *danza*. The *jarabe* represents the rude, uncultivated, spontaneous notes of the native races. The name given to a kind of sweetmeat is bestowed upon a rustic song and dance in which the dancers treat each other to dulces in the intermission.

The *danza* is the favorite dance-music of Mexico. It is in synco-pated time, and is of a very weird character. There are also *contradanzas*. "La Paloma" and "Chloe" are good specimens of the *danza* which have become popular in the United States since the Mexican bands first introduced their music abroad. A very popular schottische is "Cualquier Cosa." The name signifies "anything," or "whatever you please." When any one is asked to play, and asks, "What shall I play?" the most ready response is the name of this schottische. But its popularity does not necessarily rest upon its fortunate name, for it is thoroughly characteristic and very attractive.

It is only recently that examples of the *jarabes*, *danzas*, *contradanzas*, *habaneras*, *schottisches*, *mazurkas*, and *polkas* heard from the

bands have been given to the public in Mexico. The runic productions of the lower classes were not reduced to writing, and the compositions of the band-leaders were preserved in manuscript. Within the last few years attempts have been made to collect the former and preserve them in such form that they can be more fully enjoyed by the people, and also to publish the latter. The result has been various collections of "*aires nacionales mexicanas*." Several are before me as I write. One was compiled with difficulty by a prominent band-leader.

To write of the music of Mexico without mentioning "*La Golondrina*" and "*El Himno Nacional*" would be inexcusable. Yet what can I write of the first, save to repeat what every one who visits Mexico declares, that it is the sweetest, saddest, most pathetic song to be heard in any land? All my efforts to learn its history failed. Probably it is not Mexican at all, but Spanish; and I am sometimes inclined to accept the story that it was originally "*Al Partir de Granada*," inspired by Boabdil's lament over the expulsion of the Moors from their city, rather than the other story, that it commemorates the expulsion of the nuns from the city of Mexico, less than half a century ago. Yet neither may be the correct story, and I am sure the touching song of "*The Swallow*" is worthy of a more romantic history than any of the apocryphal tales now given.

Of "*El Himno Nacional*" I am fortunately able to give some information, and it ought to be interesting to readers in a land that has no national hymn. In December, 1853, General Santa Anna being President of the republic of Mexico, it was deemed by the government right and proper that the nation should have a hymn worthily singing its praises and its destiny; whereupon the President issued a decree offering a prize for a poem "truly patriotic" to be approved by the supreme government. The time allowed for the courtship of the poetic muse was but twenty days from the issuing of the decree. Nevertheless twenty-six poetical compositions were submitted at the end of that time, and out of these was selected that of Don Francisco Gonzalez Bocanegra, consisting of ten verses of eight lines each, with a chorus. On the 5th of February, 1854, a decree was issued giving musical composers two months in which to submit music for Bocanegra's hymn in competition for a prize. The committee appointed to decide upon the merits of the sixteen musical compositions submitted in response to this decree consisted of the master of the cathedral choir of Guadalajara, a musician from Tepic, and the leader of the military band in Puebla. The prize was awarded in August to Don Jaime Nunó, a Spanish professor of music permanently located in Mexico, and he was directed to proceed at once to prepare his work for use by the military bands and to instruct them so far as was necessary. On the 11th of September "*El Himno Nacional Mexicano*" was first played in public at the beginning of the great national feast of Mexican Independence.

Republics are proverbially ungrateful. Mexico in those days was not a "howling" success as a republic; but, though poor, she was able to testify to her appreciation of music, albeit somewhat neglectful of her national poet. Bocanegra received his prize-money,—and some fame, let us hope. The Spanish professor did rather better than that.

He furnished two hundred and sixty copies of the music for the use of the military bands, at three dollars a copy, and retained the copy-right, that he might benefit by the sale of copies for the piano and private use. Yet all who hear the Mexican National Hymn are ready to aver that it is worth all that Nunó ever received for it.

Arthur Howard Noll.

BOOKS THAT GIRLS HAVE LOVED.

HAVING arrived at what should be years of discretion, and having acquired a taste for Wagner and Browning, I sometimes look back with pity or envy to the years when the "Maiden's Prayer" moved me to rapture and when "Bingen on the Rhine" was the most pathetic poem ever written. Having also found that a talk about old favorites is interesting, even to women grown, I ask that we turn backward Time in his flight, and return to the days of pinafores for a brief space.

I do not believe that the modern child knows anything about an attic. The *fin-de-siècle* attic is a respectable place, where boxes are solemnly piled, and where moth camphor sheds its fragrance abroad. There are hardly any old books to be found, for most people send them to the Hebrew merchants on the side streets. Our attic was a long low room with mysteriously dark corners, into whose depths we did not penetrate. There was an old hair trunk in one corner that held some of grandmother's muslin dresses. It was opened only on rare occasions, and I was allowed but a glimpse of the faded beauty within. There was an old spinning-wheel where spiders hung fantastic wreaths, and there was a guitar with broken, mouldered strings. But the corner where the books were piled was the spot I liked the best. An old-fashioned, tiny-paned window let an occasional sunbeam stray across the "Ladies' Repositories" and "Saints' Rests." There was a fine old elm-tree that tapped against the window, and sometimes a robin sent a thrill of song into the dusty corners. Just beneath the window-seat I used to sit, a small crouched form, bending over a musty volume. But when I wished to read under the most blissful conditions, I fortified myself with half a dozen russet apples, whose juice would have given flavor to a treatise on Hebrew grammar. Now, I never see a russet apple without seeing also the dim old attic and an utterly contented child; and I am sure the market-women misunderstand my wistful glance, for they draw closer to their baskets and look at me in suspicious fashion. An apple, so some tell us, deprived us of our Eden; but apples were an important feature of my childish Paradise. So let us leave them in Pomona's care, and look at the intellectual part of the feast.

My first love was the queer little tale "Alice in Wonderland." The book was profuse in illustrations: the cover was of a pale gray, with a lobster of sanguinary color in one corner, and the white rabbit, stately and beruffled, in the other. Just above the title, the Cheshire

cat grinned generously down. I have sometimes tried to find out the secret of that book's fascination. One feature that delighted my unorthodox taste was the parody of the worthy Dr. Watts. Quite early in life I conceived a violent dislike for the good man, and often wished that his impertinent observation of the little busy bee had met with so stinging a rebuke that he had not been able to write his prosaic lines. With great glee I quoted

How doth the little crocodile
Improve his shining tail!

The imperious manner in which the Queen of Hearts conducted her massacres appealed strongly to my imagination. There are some good people of the present day who consider the Santa Claus myth a wicked deception and "Jack the Giant-Killer" and "Bluebeard" tales that would encourage cruelty in the young. Perhaps these people are sensible, but I hope that they will not convert the world. As it is, the beliefs of our childhood are disappearing too fast. The fairies have long ago danced from the earth; King Arthur is only a dream and the Round Table a delusion; Mary Stuart wore a red wig, and Cleopatra was a faded blonde. King Alfred did not let the cakes burn, and there was no apple for William Tell to shoot, and who knows if there were a William Tell? Joan of Arc has become Jeanne d'Arc, and she was not burned to death at all. Thus even the market-place of Rouen has been robbed of its traditions. Henry the Eighth has been whitewashed by Froude, and now a magazine article tries to show that Marat was a philanthropist.

Be these things true or false, the massacres on paper were delightful. All the world may love a lover, but every child loves a fight. Therefore the small boy turns to David and Goliath, and takes comparatively little interest in the infant Moses. I always sympathized with the junior hero of "Helen's Babies," who wanted to hear the "bluggy" stories. Of course we were told afterwards that the Queen's orders were not often carried out, but that did not spoil the excitement which thrilled me in "Off with his Head!" There is a charming comradeship between Alice and her animal friends. White rabbits I regarded with great interest after reading of the important personage in Wonderland, and I greatly desired to meet with a literary lobster. I gave a curly-headed Nora that book last Christmas, and felt a pang of envy one evening when I found her eyes dancing over

"Will you walk a little faster?" said the whiting to the snail.

As I became older, a more emotional type of fiction claimed my love. Miss Wetherell's weeping little girls were interesting for a time, and the "Wide Wide World" held me spellbound for several rainy afternoons. Ellen Montgomery's wrongs made me mourn with Ellen and abuse her cruel aunt. Mr. John was a heroic person, but later experience has made me decide that, if any paragon like him ever lived, his associates were to be pitied. It was comforting to find that the

heroine invariably ended her career as a wealthy young person with a gold watch and a rosewood piano. "Queechy" succeeded, and Mr. Carleton, just a trifle more of the prig than Mr. John, received the consideration due to his English castle and his finished manners. The heroine—Fleda—was the dampest person of whom I have read. She waded through tears to the estate of matrimony, and the last chapter left her weeping in her unfortunate husband's embrace. But it was only after I had arrived at the age of thirteen and had mastered the intricacies of the fifth proposition that the extremely lachrymose nature of Fleda palled upon me. For a few months she was "just lovely," and, when she spread her slender fingers before her face and let the tears trickle through them, I became conscious of a sympathetic cough, and a few briny drops would mingle with the juice of the russet apples.

It was a far cry from Fleda to Gypsy Breynton, but the Gypsy books became popular in the neighborhood, and a quartette of small maidens blessed Elizabeth Stuart Phelps while they revelled in the frolics of the lively Gypsy. Her great attraction was her humanity,—her imperfection. She was not an immaculate young person with neatly tied shoe-strings and a temper under perfect control. Not long ago I saw a criticism of the Gypsy books which sent a pang to my heart. The writer said that Gypsy's manners left much to be desired, and that she was a sad example of hoyden to depict for American girlhood. It is quite true that Gypsy's good spirits sometimes bubbled over in expressions that were not "English undefiled," and that the girls' academy of the "Golden Crescent" was not a high-class university. But Gypsy was so brave, generous, and truth-loving that I refuse to give up my childish belief in her. There was something exceedingly pathetic in the contrast to her abounding life that we found in the poor cripple, Peace Maythorne. In the books that have been written for girls I do not think we find a sweeter type of gentle motherhood than Mrs. Breynton. We were only a group of thoughtless and often selfish school-girls, but the influence of those wholesome, merry books has not quite left us, and I never see the patient white face of a cripple without thinking of gentle Peace, who at last reached the country where the inhabitant shall not say, "I am sick." So, with every kindly wish for the creator of Gypsy, we passed on to make the acquaintance of Little Women.

Upon the girl who has not known the March family I bestow my sincerest compassion. The article which I have mentioned referred in slighting terms to the lack of repose in the manners of the little women, and that criticism also aroused my hostility. Miss Alcott's famous story has been read from the Gulf of Mexico to Hudson's Bay, and if I went to Central Africa it would not surprise me to find a daughter of the Darkest Continent laughing over Amy's limes and their sad fate. We felt at once as if all the girls were old friends, and we were all the more friendly because they were not angelic in temper or ravishingly lovely in person. We liked them all, but with one voice Jo was declared our favorite. Every girl whom I have known regards the boyish Jo with feelings of tenderness. Meg was more domestic, Amy more graceful, and Beth more gentle; but Jo, dear old blundering Jo, romped

into our hearts at once. I think we liked Amy the least of all, and we could not quite forgive her for destroying Jo's precious manuscript. It was a poor household, and the girls were by no means faultless in deportment; but there was so much fun, with such noble ideals of life, that it was no wonder that Louisa Alcott became a friend in American homes. We all liked Laurie, and compared him with the boys of our daily acquaintance to the disadvantage of the latter. He was such a chivalrous, good-looking boy that we almost made him a hero; while his mischief and his fiery temper kept him from becoming "faultily faultless." Dear little Beth seemed from the first to be the good angel of the house. We could hardly breathe from excitement when the new piano rolled into the parlor, and we knew just how Beth felt when she first touched the polished keys. Marmee was truly a home-maker, and one felt inclined to "'fess" too when the girls went to her with their woes and misdoings. But the climax of their holiday week was the best of all, and the attic spiders must have been sadly shaken by our glee over the unsavory dinner, where the strawberries were eaten to the accompaniment of salt and sour cream. Girls of our age did not take kindly to the romantic passion, and we fully sympathized with Jo when she resented the intrusion of John Brooke in the rôle of Meg's lover. He was, no doubt, an estimable young man, but the brown eyes with their wistful expression were not exciting; and we had a dreary feeling that the fun was over when Meg blushed in ridiculous fashion and dropped her yellow head on John's shoulder. One sage young person with brown plaits hanging down her back remarked, "It's perfectly absurd; mamma says it's very wrong for a girl to be engaged before she's twenty-five." We agreed with her, and pitied Meg, who gave up her liberty so early in life.

After this, we were eager to read of the further adventures of the March girls. Why does an author write sequels? A sequel is nearly always a disappointment, and the little women married were not the same old friends. Meg with the troublesome Demi and the jelly that refused to stiffen was not the dainty Meg who was fond of blue satin boots and craved the luxuries of life. Laurie, the love-sick, almost made us cry for the boy who had played tricks on his tutor and fought with Jo. But the crowning disappointment was that Laurie did not marry Jo, since marriage was to enter that once hilarious home. They might have quarrelled, but how interesting the disputes would have been, how piquant the making-up! Jo should have consoled her boy instead of falling in love with the tedious Mr. Bhaer. We took a strong dislike to that innocent man at first sight, and were utterly disgusted when Jo bestowed her hand upon her ungainly lover. Mr. Bhaer was distinctly an alien; he did not belong to the little women at all. We might have tolerated him as an elderly friend to the family, who would confine his attention to Mr. March, but to think of him as a husband for our rollicking Jo was heart-rending. It was all very sad, and his German accent did not improve matters.

Beth's gentle fading away was what we expected, but we shrank from the gloom of that sorrow, and realized that the world might be a sad place after all. Amy got more than her share of this world's

blessings. Surely, with her grace and beauty, she did not require also the gilded charms of Laurie. It may have been life, but we "grudged him sair" to Amy. Thus, although we loved Miss Alcott as well as ever, we decided not to follow further these domestic scenes, and turned to "Rose in Bloom" for comfort.

"Eight Cousins" I did not know, so Rose came to me fresh and smiling. We could not feel quite as much at home with her as we did with the poverty-stricken March girls, for Rose was an heiress, beautiful and cultured. But we treated her with due respect and admired her gowns. She had our deepest sympathy when she rebelled against her sensible uncle and declared that for a season she would be frivolous. Bonnie Prince Charlie, with all his weakness, was a delightful young man. Our sober judgment told us that he would have been a dismal failure as a husband, and that Mac would be everything that was matrimonially desirable for Rose; but Charlie, like his famous Scottish namesake, had such a bonny face, and so winning was his smile, that we secretly loved him the best of all. If he had married Rose and beaten her in his fits of intoxication, we could not have forgiven him. But the author made him gracefully withdraw from the scene when he could not conquer himself, and our hearts were tender towards the handsome boy whose life went out so sadly. Through the whole book we found the same healthy brightness, the same upholding of truth and purity, that made the little women such valued friends.

We had been inspired by the club and the newspaper in which the March family rejoiced. So we four determined to win literary bays, and decided that our Quartette Club should meet in the attic every Thursday afternoon. Our periodical was written on brown paper, and bore the name "Budget of Wit and Novelty." It did not lack for poetry, and there was an abundance of short stories, in which Italian princesses and English dukes played a prominent part. Alas for the attic and its literary tenants! The house has been taken by a doctor with a large family, the attic has been profaned by renovation, and two noisy boys are now its inmates. The poet of our Budget is married to a red-haired missionary and is in far-away China; Katie Cameron, who revelled in romance and moonlight, is a spectacled doctor; lively Elsie Stafford is lying in Farnham graveyard in the sleep that no dreams break; while I am beginning to feel that old books, old friends, and old times are best.

Erin Graham.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH.

**A History of the
United States of
America: its People
and its Institutions.
By Charles Morris.**

A school history of the United States which should follow the methods and ideals of contemporary historians has long been a want of experienced teachers. There are numerous text-books of the old stamp wherein the events dwelt upon are rather of the rulers and wars than of the people, and most of us of the elder generation have learnt our history after this lame system. Following the laudable change which has occurred in the adult point of view, we now have in this thorough and capable school-book by Mr. Charles Morris a compendium of native history as it is known to advanced thinkers. The sub-title compactly states the aim which the practised author has pursued. As given in full, the title is *A History of the United States of America: its People and its Institutions* (Lippincott). It is essentially of the people and the institutions, the pith and marrow of the land, that the student is here taught, and, thus inspired with the spirit of freedom and kindled with pride in the achievements of his countrymen, it is strange if he does not become a good citizen.

The plan which Mr. Morris has adopted to obtain fulness with brevity has been very effective. He has devoted a paragraph of fifteen or twenty lines to each successive event under the general head to which it relates. The book is divided into eleven parts, named as follows: Discovery and Inhabitants of America, The Era of Exploration, The Era of Settlement, The Era of Colonial Wars, From Colonies to United States, The Early Period of the Republic, Thirty Years of Peace and Progress, The Slavery Contest, The Civil War, Development of the Nation, Stages of Progress in the United States. The paragraphs, each distinguished by a catch-title, so called, in darker type, carry on the narrative continuously, but with such artificial breaks as are necessary in a book devoted to the instruction of the young. For instance, under the caption of Georgia, the catch-titles run as follows: Oglethorpe's Project, Imprisonment of Debtors, A Colony Formed, Georgian Industries, Restrictive Laws, Georgia Becomes a Royal Colony, The Wesleys and Whitefield. This to one familiar with the history of Georgia is suggestive of the main events in its colonial annals, and for a fresh student it covers all the ground needful in a volume dealing with the whole country. Each period and each section is fitly dealt with in the same manner, and the combined result is a book stimulating to any reader, but especially fitted for imparting those broad general impressions which it is the aim of teachers to implant.

The illustrations and maps are especially noteworthy as departing radically on the side of excellence from the conventions prevailing in school-books. Instead of the meagre and rude cuts of old we have dainty pen-and-ink drawings or half-tone plates giving authentic costumes, portraits, and other facts. The maps are abundant and useful, and the volume is enriched by the introduction of engravings from many famous historical paintings.

The Yersin Phono-Rhythmic Method of French Pronunciation, Accent, and Diction. French and English. By M. and J. Yersin.

Those who seek to learn French as the natives speak it will welcome the novel but simple method advanced by the sisters M. and J. Yersin. These ladies have long been teachers of their native tongue, and the solicitations of many devoted pupils have now led them to reduce to a written system the lessons which have been so useful, so clearly stated, and so easily learned. The book is entitled

The Yersin Phono-Rhythmic Method of French Pronunciation, Accent, and Diction, and is published by the Lippincotts. It is handy in size and excellent in typographic detail, and is embellished by attractive portraits of the authors, with some suggestive cuts of the face and mouth in the act of pronouncing. Nothing could be more complete than the entire equipment for the beginner or for the many who have mislearned the graceful Gallic speech.

The main contention of the authors is that the prevailing methods of teaching French diction omit important details which alone will enable a foreigner to acquire a perfect pronunciation. As a single instance, an essential rule of the Yersin method is, "While pronouncing you should never move your mouth." By this plan one sound only issues from the mouth, and it is a point of the greatest difficulty with learners to avoid giving two sounds, "as they are accustomed to do in their own language."

Especially is this method directed to teaching those who desire to sing in the French tongue; and if it shall banish the incoherent sounds in imitation of French which we are so often made to hear from the stage, its mission will have been a blessed one. Indeed, singers or those striving to become vocal artists would find the pathway to public favor much easier were they educated after this system to pronounce with correctness and native grace a language so essential in every art.

A Point of Conscience. By The Duchess.

That the sparkling novel by the lamented Duchess called *A Point of Conscience* is about to be issued in the cheaper but no less readable form of *Lippincott's Library of Select Novels* will be good news to the legions of readers who are

fond of these delicate, light, laughter-making tales.

A Point of Conscience is equal to the best work that Mrs. Hungerford ever did. It deals with the marital complications of a titled English family, and is exciting to the final page. In its new dress it will win many devotees for The Duchess and will lose none of the old ones who have been charmed by her shelf-full of fascinating books.

International Clinics. Edited by Drs. Judson Daland, J. Mitchell Bruce, and David W. Finlay.

Physicians whose practice leads them away from the great centres of medical study, as well as those who desire to keep in touch with the currents of medical knowledge, are patrons of *International Clinics*, the collection of contemporary clinical lectures issued quarterly by the J. B. Lippincott Company. The last number of this valuable peri-

odical, dated July, and being the second volume of the seventh series, has just appeared, and a glance at its contents shows that most of the topics to which the publication is devoted have received exhaustive treatment at the hands of specialists. Many illustrations supplement the text and do their part in rendering the volume a permanent contribution to medical literature.

Marion Harland, Author of "Common Sense in the Household," writes: "Finding Cleveland's Baking Powder the best in quality, the most economical in use, and always sure to give uniform results, I did what every intelligent housekeeper who keeps pace with the progress in domestic science would do, adopted Cleveland's Baking Powder and have used it ever since."

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point with a considerable interest and always feels sure of her cake when Cleveland's powder is at hand."

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"WORTH SENDING FOR."

"One of the best receipt books for everyday use in the kitchen that we have ever seen is that published by the Cleveland Baking Powder Company, New York, and mail-

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rounded spoonfuls
are required of

Cleveland's
BAKING POWDER

not heaping spoonfuls

ing School:
"The results obtained by the use of Cleveland's Baking Powder have always been satisfactory."

Mrs. S. T. Rorer, Principal Philadelphia Cooking School: "I am convinced Cleveland's is the purest powder made, and I have adopted it exclusively in my cooking schools and for daily household use."

Mrs. Lincoln, Author of the Boston Cook Book, writes: "I have used Cleveland's Baking Powder exclusively for several years, because I have found it what it claims to be, pure and wholesome. The results have been uniformly satisfactory."

The Editor of the Pattern Cook Book says: "Cleveland's Baking Powder makes a fine grained, spongy cake, much lighter with the same materials, than that in which * * * * has been used. The writer has tested this

ed free to those who request it and send stamp.
"It is a pamphlet of 78 pages, and contains four hundred selected receipts for soup, fish, meats of all kinds, breakfast breads, biscuits, plain and fancy cake, puddings, dessert, beverages, food for the sick, etc."

"The book also contains specially contributed receipts by Marion Harland, Miss Maria Parloa, Mrs. S. T. Rorer, Mrs. D. A. Lincoln, Mrs. Eliza R. Parker, and nearly fifty other leading teachers of cookery and writers on Domestic Science."

"We advise all our readers to send for a copy. Send address with stamp to Cleveland Baking Powder Co., New York.—*Christian Intelligencer*."

Cleveland's Baking Powder is "pure and sure." It does the work just right every time.

WHITE MAN AND BUSHMAN.—The white man depended mainly on his gun for food. And when the little Bushman looked out from behind his rocks he saw his game—all he had to live on—being killed, and the fountain which he or his fathers had found and made and had used for ages being appropriated by the white men. The plains were not wide enough for both, and the new-come children of the desert fought with the old. We have all sat listening in our childhood to the story of the fighting of those old days,—how sometimes the Boer, coming suddenly on a group of Bushmen round their fire at night, fired and killed all he could wound. If in the flight a baby were dropped and left behind, he said, "Shoot that too. If it lives it will be a Bushman or bear Bushmen."

On the other hand, when the little Bushman had his chance and found the Boer's wagon unprotected, the Boer sometimes saw a light across the plain, which was his blazing property, and when he came back would find the wagon cinders and only the charred remains of his murdered wife and children. It was a bitter, merciless fight,—the little poisoned arrow shot from behind the rocks as opposed to the great flint-lock gun. The victory was inevitably with the flint-lock, but there may have been times when it almost seemed to lie with the arrow: it was a merciless primitive fight, but it seems to have been on the whole fair and even, and in the end the little Bushman vanished.—*Fortnightly Review*.

HIS OBJECT.—Deacon Goodman.—"My boy, do you know that this is the Sabbath? I hope you are not going a-fishing with that hook and line?"

Boy.—"No, sir; I'm only going to see if there are any wicked, Sabbath-breaking fish in that stream over yonder. If there should happen to be, I suppose it wouldn't be wrong to punish them by pulling them out, would it?"—*Boston Transcript*.

FRANCE'S FOREIGN LEGION.—Probably the most remarkable army division in the world is the foreign legion of France. It is this legion which is invariably sent into the greatest danger. Whenever there are hardships to be borne to which the French authorities do not care to expose the regular troops, the foreign legion is invariably designated for the purpose.

Naturally the question arises, Why is this so?

The character of the men who fill its ranks is the explanation.

Almost without exception they are men who, while brave beyond question, have a past which they wish to bury. Many of them are serving under incognitos and place no value upon their lives. Fully fifty per cent. are foreigners, adventurers and refugees.

A writer states that in one company he has found a Roumanian prince who was under suspicion of having murdered his brother; an Italian lieutenant-colonel of cavalry, bearing an illustrious name, who had been dismissed from King Humbert's army in disgrace in consequence of being found cheating at cards; a Russian nihilist who escaped from Siberia; an ex-canon of the cathedral of Notre-Dame at Paris, who had been suspended from his ecclesiastical functions in consequence of an offence committed against public morality; an English ex-captain of the rifle brigade; and a German count, who had not only served as lieutenant in the First Regiment of guards at Berlin, but had also held a position on the military staff of the late Emperor of Germany.—*New York Recorder*.



OUR
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NEVER MAKES A MISTAKE.—It is a great thing to have a servant who never makes a mistake. The value of such a servant is simply beyond price; and such a servant is the Royal Baking Powder. It never fails to do its work properly when put to raise bread, rolls, cake, biscuit, or other food. Other baking powders, like some servants, sometimes make a miss of it; Royal never.

A perfect baking powder must have three virtues. It must be pure and wholesome; it must have high leavening power, so as to make the food light and flaky; and it must be able to retain all its leavening gas until required for use, so that its action in raising food will be always uniform. All these qualities housekeepers say they find in Royal.

The keeping quality of a baking powder is of special importance in this country. Most powders if not used when first made are found to be ineffective. If kept even a few weeks in our climate, they lose their leavening power, become lumpy or caked, and valueless.

The superior keeping quality of the Royal arises from the extraordinary care in its manufacture, and the scientific principles employed in its combination. The articles used in its composition are most highly refined, thoroughly dried by heat before being compounded, and so prepared and coated as to prevent their uniting prematurely or otherwise than under the influence of heat and water necessarily used in cooking or baking.

The Royal is now used extensively in the low latitudes of Africa, Australia, etc., where it has been found to be the only baking powder that will withstand the climate without deterioration.—*Hints to Housekeepers.*

DOGMA.—Teacher.—“Mary, make a sentence with dogma as subject.”

Mary (after careful thought).—“The dogma has three puppies.”—*San Francisco Chronicle.*

JAPANESE SELF-SACRIFICE.—On board the Matsushima, one man, who had been shot in the abdomen and whose intestines were protruding from the gaping wounds, refused to be carried to the surgeon's ward, because, he said, he did not want to take any of the fighters from their work in order to carry him below. Another, after having had his body burnt out of all recognition in attempting to extinguish a fire, stood by helping all he could till the flames were put out, when he died. A third, mortally wounded man, whose every gasp brought forth a gush of blood, would not close his eyes until he had told a comrade where the key of an important locker was and what the locker contained. A chief gunner, whose under jaw had been shot away, and who could, of course, not utter a word, signed to a subordinate with a nod to take his place, and fell dead after he had placed the handle of the gun-lever in his subordinate's hand.

Two dusky small boys were quarrelling; one was pouring forth a torrent of vituperative epithets, while the other leaned against a fence and calmly contemplated him. When the flow of language was exhausted he said,—

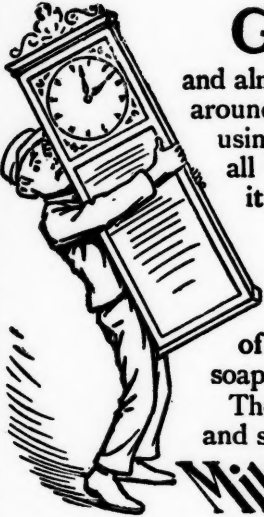
“Are you troo?”

“Yes!”

“You ain't got nuffin more to say?”

“No.”

“Well, all dem tings what you called me, you is.”



Give her time,

and almost every soap-using woman will come around to the use of **Pearline**. The soap-using habit is strong, to be sure. After all these years some women can't put it aside without doubting and trembling.

But when a woman once wakes up to the fact that she needs and deserves the very best household help, then the arguments in favor of **Pearline** prove stronger than any soap habit.

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PROVIDENT LIFE AND TRUST CO. OF PHILADELPHIA.

Attention is directed to the new Instalment-Annuity Policy of the Provident, which provides a fixed income for twenty years, and for the continuance of the income to the widow for the balance of her life, if she should survive the instalment period of twenty years.

In everything which makes Life Insurance perfectly safe and moderate in cost, and in liberality to policy-holders, the Provident is unsurpassed.

YOUNG MOTHERS should early learn the necessity of keeping on hand a supply of Gail Borden Eagle Brand Condensed Milk for nursing babies as well as for general cooking. It has stood the test for thirty years, and its value is recognized.

UNEQUAL RIGHTS.—A clever woman at a Sorosis breakfast was bewailing the fact that the discrimination between man and woman was in most instances unjust. "Just take the case of Lot's wife, as far back as Scripture days. She looked backward, and was promptly turned to a pillar of salt. Mr. Edward Bellamy looked backward not very long ago, and the world rewarded him with thousands of dollars. Is that justice?" she asked.—*New York Journal*.

BILL JOHNSON ON RELIGION.

I ain't no stickler, fellers,
On sich ez sects an' creeds,
But judges folks accordin'
To the natur' ov thur deeds.

The man what's got religion
Dead solid in his heart
Will allus face the music
An' do a hero's part.

Hit makes him give back money
Found layin' in the road.
Hit makes him help a feller
To lug along his load.

Hit makes him strong an' happy
Under enny sort ov loss.
Hit makes him state pertick'lers
When tradin' off a hoss.

Hit makes him hol' his temper
When wife or chillun frets.
Hit makes him save his money
An' pay his hones' debts.

No matter what arises,
He'll do the best he can.
In every deal you'll find him
A straight, square man.

Atlanta Constitution.

"BRAVO, PAPA!"—First Tragedian.—"Heard the latest of old Buskin?"

Low Comedian.—"No. What is it?"

First Tragedian.—"Why, you see, he's been on the stage twenty years and never made a hit in his life. They gave him a good part in the new piece, and he made up his mind he'd get some applause if it cost him a leg. He's got eight children, you know, and he put them in a row in the stalls and told them to shout 'Bravo!' at the top of their lungs when he reached the climax of his big scene in the second act. What did the kids do but get up and yell, 'Bravo, papa!' so you could hear them all over the house. It gave the old man right away."—*Pearson's Weekly*.

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Save your outside wrappers of DOBBINS ELECTRIC SOAP and DOBBINS FLOATING-BORAX SOAP until you have 13 *laundry size*, or 20 *small size*, then cut out the trade-marks and mail them to us, and we will send you, postpaid, Portfolio 1. Another 13 or 20 trade-marks, as above, will entitle you to Portfolio 2, and so on until you have received the entire set of 12 Portfolios. In sending for Portfolios, *always* specify which number you received last. They were imported to be given for 20 and 40 wrappers, but for a limited time we reduced them (to all LIPPINCOTT readers) to 13 or 20 wrappers, as above. A handsome case bound in cloth, with gilt letters, to hold the 12 Portfolios, will be sent *free*, with Portfolio No. 12, to those who secure a complete set.

Dobbins Soap Manufacturing Company,
PHILADELPHIA, PA.



For Children While Cutting Their Teeth.

An Old and Well-Tried Remedy,

FOR OVER FIFTY YEARS.

MRS. WINSLOW'S SOOTHING SYRUP

has been used for over FIFTY YEARS by MILLIONS of MOTHERS for their CHILDREN WHILE TEETHING, with PERFECT SUCCESS. IT SOOTHES THE CHILD, SOFTENS the GUMS, ALLAYS all PAIN, CURES WIND COLIC, and is the best remedy for DIARRHOEA. Sold by Druggists in every part of the world. Be sure and ask for **Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup**, and take no other kind.

TWENTY-FIVE CENTS A BOTTLE.

A MICHIGAN ROMANCE.—An interesting story by Stanley Waterloo, also containing valuable information about the summer resorts in the North, will be mailed to any address on receipt of four cents to pay postage. Address D. G. Edwards, Passenger Traffic Manager, C. H. & D. Railway, Cincinnati, Ohio.

A STORY OF VICTORIA.—The following story is told of Queen Victoria and Lady Isabel Somerset: "When Lady Isabel was four or five years old, a ball was given at Buckingham Palace, to be attended by none except the first-born of peers. She went with her parents, the Earl and Countess Somers. Being an independent little thing, she strayed off from her guardians and went on a tour of observation through the great hall, and finally, when Queen Victoria and Prince Albert left to go to the banquet table, she seated herself on the cushioned seat the queen had vacated. She had on a white dress with real daisies fastened to it, and a wreath of the same flowers rested on her hair. When Victoria returned, she was much amused, and, patting the girl on the head, said, 'This is little Isabel.' With a toss of her head the child answered, 'This is Lady Isabel.' When Lady Somerset was eighteen years old, she was presented at court, and wore a white dress covered with natural flowers as before. As the queen bent down to kiss her cheek, a custom with the daughters of the peers when they are presented, she said, 'Daisies again, little Isabel—Lady Isabel, I mean.' She had remembered the circumstance of the ball-room all those years in the midst of her preoccupied life."—*Woman's Journal*.

BATH-ROOMS À LA MODE.—Milady's bath-room has grown to be in its luxurious perfection a triumph of artistic cleverness. The skill of the architect is employed for special designs, and there is no limit to the decorations. Besides the regular tub, which is beautiful as ornamental porcelain and silver can make it, there is a sitz bath-tub with spray and wave attachment and other apparatus to suit the taste and convenience of the owner. In some instances the room is lighted by skylight or windows of stained glass in exquisite designs of water-nymphs and goddesses. In many the beautiful works of art, both in fresco and oil-painting and statuary in marble and bronze, represent a small fortune, and a loan exhibition of these treasures would create a profound sensation in artistic circles. With these voluptuous surroundings and the delicate atmosphere from the perfumed waters, the whole is less suggestive of the scriptural injunction "Wash and be clean" than of "Steep thy senses in luxury." Not the most extravagant, for where one has plenty of money there is no extravagance in putting large sums of it in circulation, but the one representing the most lavish expenditure, is probably that of Mrs. John Jacob Astor, while a close second is that of Mrs. George Gould.—*New York Journal*.

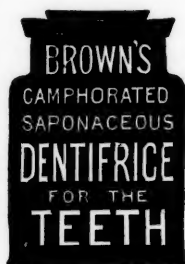
LUXURY IN CENTRAL AFRICA.—We learn from a London interviewer that Zomba, the capital of British Central Africa, is quite a civilized place, in which the visitor may require a dress-coat. "If the commissioner asks you to dine, you will find that he lives in a luxurious mansion built high up on the shoulder of a lofty mountain. Your dinner will be cooked by a Hindoo chef of exquisite cunning, you will be waited upon by deft servants as black as night, the table will be decorated with flowers such as no British duchess could buy, the view from the windows will delight your eye. After dinner you will step out into the veranda, perhaps, and smoke your cigar with the roar of the cascading river in your ears, or fall into a luxurious chair and read the last novel from Mudie's or the last batch of papers which the postman has just delivered. Then early to bed and early to rise, your bath, your coffee, and a little fruit perhaps, a stroll in the delightful garden, full of fruits and flowers, a peep at the commissioner's private menagerie, then *déjeuner*."—*London Star*.

What ambition have you? What of all things is nearest your heart, and therefore your true self?

Fame, is it? The trumpet through which it shall reverberate is already cracked. Is it wealth? None should despise nor any worship it. Is it the rightful care of your family—the education of the young, their safeguard against ignorance and penury, and the assured independence and comfort of your widow? The means are within your reach. Look within!

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THE BEST TOILET LUXURY AS A DENTIFRICE IN THE WORLD.

TO CLEANSE AND WHITEN THE TEETH,

TO REMOVE TARTAR FROM THE TEETH,

TO SWEETEN THE BREATH AND PRESERVE THE TEETH,

TO MAKE THE GUMS HARD AND HEALTHY,

USE BROWN'S CAMPHORATED SAPONACEOUS DENTIFRICE.

Price, Twenty-Five Cents a Jar.

For Sale by all Druggists.

THE BEST DANCERS.—Americans are the best dancers in the world, says Carl Marwig. The Russians come second, and the Spaniards third. The French and Germans do not count. When Americans dance abroad, every one else stops dancing to watch them. A leader of cotillons, Mr. Marwig believes, is born, not made. He must have a certain mental cleverness and quickness. His figures must be developed as the dance progresses. They must be simple as well as attractive, and the man who is not a born cotillon leader will not make the dance a success.—*New York Times*.

THE POET'S INCONSISTENCY.—"You speak of the brooks," said the critic, as he looked over his friend's poem, "as the most joyous things in nature."

"So they are," said the poet.

"But you are inconsistent."

"Why?"

"Because later on you say they are ever murmuring."—*Washington Times*.

THE MUSICAL TEMPERAMENT.—Speaking to Bettina von Arnim about the influence upon his mind of Goethe's poems, Beethoven declared that they powerfully impressed him, both by their rhythm and by their matter, "and," he added, "I am moved to composition by their language and by the lofty spirit of harmony pervading them." So that what stirred in him the creative impulse, as he came under the spell of a great poet, was the ecstasy born of the measured words and of their inner sense, their æsthetic and spiritual rather than their purely intellectual content. And it was in this connection that he affirmed music to be "the medium between the spiritual and the sensuous life,"—a luminous and pregnant word which sorts not ill with the view here presented and is perhaps as near an approach to a definition of the undefinable as is likely to be compassed.—*Blackwood's Magazine*.

USES OF EMERY.—For many years most of the emery has been brought from Turkey and the Greek islands. Its value for cutting and polishing has been known since the beginning of history. Very crude methods are in use for obtaining this substance for market. Enormous fires are built on or against the rocks, which are then broken or cracked by throwing jets of cold water against them. Emery has many uses, among which is its employment in polishing and cutting. Being so unmanageable, it for a long time defied the efforts of man to put it into available shape, but at length it was cemented into usable forms and it was moulded into wheels. Emery millstones are a later-day improvement. They are the most practical of all stones, because they are not affected by heat and the face is always sharp. As cutting and polishing powder, emery is of great value, and emery sandpaper is an important article of manufacture.—*New York Ledger*.

NAPOLEON LEARNS HIS BUSINESS.—A few days after the thirteenth Vendémiaire I happened to be at the office of the general staff in the Rue Neuve des Capucins, when General Bonaparte, who was lodging in the house, came in. I can still see his little hat, surmounted by a chance plume badly fastened on, his tricolor sash more than carelessly tied, his coat cut anyhow, and a sword which, in truth, did not seem the sort of weapon to make his fortune. Flinging his hat on a large table in the middle of the room, he went up to an old general named Kriegg, a man with a wonderful knowledge of detail and the author of a very good soldier's manual. He made him take a seat beside him at the table, and began questioning him, pen in hand, about a host of facts connected with the service and discipline. Some of his questions showed such a complete ignorance of the most ordinary things that several of my comrades smiled. I was myself struck by the number of his questions, their order, and their rapidity. But what struck me still more was the spectacle of a commander-in-chief perfectly indifferent about showing his subordinates how completely ignorant he was of various points of the business which the junior of them was supposed to know perfectly; and this raised him a hundred cubits in my eyes.—*Memoirs of Baron Thiebault*.

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Simplicity
One of its
Cardinal
Virtues.




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FOR THE
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